

Dr.D.G.S.DHINAKARAN

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**A Practical Guide to
Heavenly visitations
Supernatural Experiences &
Ministry of Spiritual Power**

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About the Author!

Dr. Dhinakaran is a chosen vessel of God, who reclaimed him just as he was about to end his life out of frustration. Right from that day, for over 37 years, he has been as ambassador at large for Christ.

One distinct feature of his ministry that has endeared him to millions all over the world is the compassion of Christ that he communicates to them. It permeates all his messages, intercessory prayers, books and individual counselling. It is no wonder therefore that several thousands from all over India and the world over are drawn to the Good News meetings addressed by him. As many as 3,00,000 persons flock to hear him at some of the open air evening meetings to receive amidst striking miracles their much needed physical health and peace of mind. Similar blessings are being received by readers of his books, his monthly magazine, "Jesus Calls" – which is published in 7 languages, those who listen to his messages over the radio and audio cassettes or view excerpts from his world wide ministry in video cassettes.

Toiling day and night incessantly to communicate to the world the love and compassion of Christ by 19 different means is the sole business and concern of one of His most potent apostle Dr. D.G.S. Dhinakaran in the world today.

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Foreword

On 26.9.1977, our Lord Jesus appeared to me posing this baffling query:

"My son, who will continue to carry on this unique ministry of love and compassion, I have entrusted to you?" Stunned, I stood speechless for a moment. Instantly our gracious Lord flashed the following verse before me:

"...they (His disciples) went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs"

(Mark 16:20)

The Lord gave me a specific command and a sweet promise: "Choose some simple-minded persons, who have a burning zeal to preach My Gospel with signs and wonders. Explain to them the path I have led you through. Impart to them, especially, the experiences of your journey through the valley of tears. Describe in detail, how they too can mightily do My ministry with love and compassion, and armed with My nine "Gifts" of grace and nine dimensions of the 'Fruit of Love', which I grant. Train them to minister to the broken-hearted, with the same burden with which you labour. On the last day of your training course, when you pray for them, laying your hands on them, I will come down, intimate to them details of their future ministry and pour on them the same "Gifts" and power which I have endowed you with! This is the origin of the Institute of Power Ministry and the Lord is fulfilling His promise in the lives of these trained Evangelists.

In this Institute of Power Ministry, to every batch, I used to give lectures on the "Gifts" and the 'Fruit' of the Holy Spirit. We have conducted this divine training course in many countries all over the world for several batches preparing nearly 7,000 Evangelists. There is a constant demand from many, for the audio cassettes of my lectures given in the Institute of Power Ministry. There is a reason for this. In these lectures, I deal at length not only with the "Gifts", but with my deep spiritual experiences and encounters with Christ and my spiritual journeys to Heaven, granted by the grace of our Lord Jesus and aided by the power of the Holy Spirit, affording me the rare, wonderful, and breath-taking sights of Heaven (many times), as

well. It is quite natural that the listeners become enthralled and thrilled.

According to the request of many beloved brothers and sisters, I wrote this book, working day and night for a few days. This book contains a concise of my lectures given to various batches of trainees in the Institute of Power Ministry. And it is our Lord Jesus Christ who granted me these deep truths and revelations through the Holy Spirit.

I was not trained in any Theological College. All the Biblical knowledge I have is what the Holy Spirit imparts to me, quite directly, when I study the Bible. There is a saying, "A single testimony of personal spiritual experience is more an unparalleled blessing than a thousand sermons." Accordingly countless are the spiritual truths and experiences, I discovered and enjoyed in the path of my ministry for the past 40 years. I have put some of them recalled to my memory, by the Holy Spirit, in this book, which is definitely not the product or exhibition of my human knowledge or wisdom.

The objective of this book is to explain, in practical terms, how to receive and experience the power and "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit and how to save millions of souls through this mighty power and "Gifts". In simple terms this book aims to reveal divine truths to the servants of God, so that they can discover and follow them in their day-to-day life.

May the Lord God Himself pour out His 'generous Spirit' (Ps. 51:12) into the minds of all readers of this book and inspire them too, to receive the matchless "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit! May He use them, as He did the prophets, Elijah and Elisha to move the whole world in spirit! May the Biblical verse,

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12)

be fulfilled in their lives!

This is the sole aim of my writing this book. I will be extremely delighted to see countless servants of God rise up, inspired by this book, and receive a new anointing and vision of God. I thank our gracious Lord Jesus, who alone has abundantly blessed me with the spiritual experiences delineated in this book. Millions of thanks to Him!

"Who is like the LORD our God, who dwells on high, He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with princes-with the princes of His

people" (Ps. 113:5,7,8)

All glory, laud, honour and praise be to Him alone,
increasingly, for ever and ever!

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My wife, Dr.(Mrs.) Stella Dhinakaran who incessantly inspired and helped me to compile this book.

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Brother P. Garg, the Dean of the Institute of Power Ministry, who persistently impressed upon me about the necessity of publishing this book, for many years, and the other "Jesus Calls" Evangelists, the Bishops, the Pastors and the other Servants of God.

Above all, millions of thanks to the Son of God, Jesus Christ who granted me divine mercy, grace and physical strength, and helped me to finish writing out this book, with its proper sequential order.

-Dr. D.G.S. Dhinakaran.

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Gifts and Fruit of the Holy Spirit!

Introduction

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning"
(James 1:17)

The above verse brings out the profound truth that all gifts originate and descend directly from the Lord God Almighty Himself. True! Power belongs to God (Ps.62:11). The Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father (John 15:26). The Lord God Himself distributes the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit to each one of us individually.

The 'Gifts' of the Holy Spirit!

*"For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit,
to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,
to another faith by the same Spirit,
to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,
to another the working of miracles,
to another prophecy,
to another discerning of spirits,
to another different kinds of tongues,
to another the interpretation of tongues
(I Cor. 12:8-10)*

This important Biblical passage enumerates, in simple terms, the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit.

Fruit of the Spirit!

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control..."

(Gal. 5:22,23)

These verses describe the 'Fruit' of the Holy Spirit to us.

Exposition of the Nine 'Gifts' and 'Fruit' of the Holy Spirit!

The nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit may be described as nine channels employed by the Lord, through which flow His power and presence. But the 'Fruit' of the Spirit is an expression of God's true nature.

In Genesis 17:1, God is called 'El Shaddai'. This wonderful name expounding the true nature of God means: 'A mighty man (Father) of valour with the breasts of a feeding mother'. Indeed our Lord is all powerful, on the one hand (Jer. 32:27), and on the other, more tender hearted than a nursing mother (Is.49:15). Consequently, the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit (which transmit to us the mighty Lord's matchless power) as well as the 'Fruit' of the Spirit (that endows us with God's compassion) proceed only from Him.

The Bible refers to the **"Gifts of the Holy Spirit"** in the plural form and the fruits of the Spirit as the **"Fruit of the Spirit"** in the singular form. Biblical scholars reason out this proposition thus: The nine fruits of the Spirit are part and parcel of a single Fruit - **"LOVE"**.

Hence, the singular unit!

Consider an orange fruit, for instance. When peeled out, it is found to contain several segments. These segments are unified into a single fruit. Likewise, the single Fruit, 'Love' has eight segments: yet, as each segment has its own size and shape, underlying the phrase 'The Fruit of the Spirit', are nine different fruits of the Spirit. Each one exhilarates us, having its own unique characteristic; but all of them, in union with one another are moulded into a singular unit, 'Love'!

"PEACE" is unique and **"JOY"** has its own place in our lives. Similarly all the other segments of the Fruit of the Spirit are essential to us. Yet all of them have been rolled into a singular unit, 'Love'.

I have explained that the Fruit of the Spirit reveals the divine nature of God. True, the most important virtue of our Lord is 'Love'!

"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (I John 4:8,16)

That is why the singular unit, 'Fruit' - 'Love', which is the condensation of God's unique nature, becomes very significant.

"...The LORD of hosts, who is... excellent in guidance" (Is.

28:29)

"...His tender mercies are over all His works"

(Ps. 145:9)

These two verses bring out the two prime qualities of God 'Power' and 'Love'.

It becomes imperative therefore that the faithful servant and follower of God should exhibit the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit which reveal the mighty power of the Lord on the one side and His overflowing love and mercy (the Fruit) on the other. This fact can be easily illustrated by juxtaposing the two verses,

"...The LORD is gracious and full of compassion" (Ps.111:4)

"...He (an upright man) is gracious, and full of compassion..." (Ps. 112:4)

The "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit will be manifested in the life of a man filled with love and compassion, as can be inferred from the verse,

"...faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6)

Let us consider the life of St. Paul closely. As Romans 15:18,19 tell us, his ministry brought out the inimitable power of God working through the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit 'with signs and wonders'. God's indescribable power and strength supported him in his labour.

"To this end I also labour, striving according to His working which works in me mightily" (Col. 1:29)

Yet, on the other hand, it was Christ's unique love which constrained St. Paul to labour day and night (II Cor. 5:14) in order to bring the power of God to the people. Yes! Power on one side. Love, on the other! Just because both power and love were unitedly operative in his life, he described himself thus:

"From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17)

A loveless life, though filled with the "Gifts" is meaningless, as clearly and definitively explained by the following Biblical verses:

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing"
(I Cor. 13:2,3)

Love - The rudder of the ship of life!

Consider a rudder of a ship! It is small! Yet it has the capacity to turn around a large sized ship. We have a beautiful definition of a rudder of a ship in the Bible:

"Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires" (James 3:4)

Similarly, love controls and guides the gifts - filled life.

Love - The regulator!

Consider again the function of the regulator in an electric fan in our home! Just a small sized regulator! But it controls the speed of a large sized fan. If the regulator turns awry, the fan spins on uncontrollably, unable to serve its purpose.

Yes! 'Love' serves the purpose of a rudder or a regulator 'Love' alone can give meaning and direction to the powerful "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit in our life and ministry!

To illustrate this fact, a pastor narrated a funny anecdote. Once a young preacher, endowed with ample gifts of healings visited the pastor's church, from abroad. The pastor organised Gospel meetings for him. At the end of each meeting, the young preacher used to pray for the ailing people individually. During one such prayer session, a vehicle driver passing that way got curious about these prayers. He was suffering for 18 years, from an incurable stomach pain. He approached the preacher and explained his problem.

You know what the young preacher did! He gave a strong kick on the suffering man's stomach with his booted leg, to the horror of the driver, and cried out, "You wicked devil, the root cause of pain, in the name of Jesus get out of this man!" Doubling up with doubled pain, the man fled away, just to escape from the young preacher, with lightning speed. But the young preacher turned round and declared loudly from the

dais: "Witness the power of God! He has healed this man instantly and the man is running away in sheer ecstasy and joy! Bring him back and let him give his testimony!" But the driver sped off in his vehicle, holding his stomach in excruciating pain and tears.

The only cause of such inhuman acts on the part of certain servants of God is that the rudder - the regulator - 'Love' - is missing.

Look at the glorious example set by our gracious Lord Jesus! When He beheld the suffering and disabled people, He was moved with compassion; He touched them and healed them. Romans 12:15 tells us,
"...weep with those who weep"

When He saw His beloved friend Lazarus dead, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35) along with the sisters and the kith and kin of Lazarus.

The Holy Bible describes Him as a great prophet. "...mighty in deed and word before God and all the people"

(Luke 24:19)

But at the same time He was an embodiment of compassion! That is why, with a lofty aim in view, God grants the mighty "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit along with the Fruit of the Spirit (Love) which alone, like the rudder of a ship, can control and direct the power - packed "Gifts" towards the good of the people. Thus we can perceive the working of several qualities of the 'Fruit' of the Spirit interlinked with each of the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit. In other words, those who experience and enjoy the "Gifts" will exhibit the qualities of the 'Fruit' also. Ultimately, only the characteristics of the 'Fruit', 'Love' help in the operation of the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit smoothly and sweetly. We can discern, thus, the unique functioning of the 'Fruit', 'Love', in the ministries of the servants of God abounding with the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit.

The following table will demonstrate this truth.

<i>Gift</i>	<i>Segments of the fruit that function alongside</i>
1. The gift of the word of wisdom 2. The gift of the word of knowledge (eg.) Dear Saviour Jesus (Col. 2:3 ; Matt. 13:54)	Love, Peace, Gentleness (John 13:1 ; 14:27; Matt. 11:29)
3. The gift of faith Stephen (Acts 6:8)	Love, Faith (Acts 7:59,60)

4. The gifts of healings Paul - (Acts 19:11,12)	Love, Longsuffering, Kindness (II Cor. 5:14 ; 6:6)
5. The gift of the working of miracles 6. The gift of prophecy Moses (Deut. 34:10-12)	Love, Peace, Gentleness, Goodness (Num. 12:3 ; James 5:10 ; Acts 11:24)
7. The gift of discerning of spirits Paul - (Acts 16:18) Peter - (Acts 8:23)	Love, Longsuffering, Self-control (Mark 5:9 ; 9:19 ; I Cor. 9:27)
8. The gift of speaking different kinds of tongues 9. The gift of the interpretation of tongues	Love, Joy (I Pet. 1:8,9; II Sam. 23:1,2)

Exposition of the Holy Spirit!

Well! Next, let us ponder for a moment over the question as to who the Holy Spirit, the bestower of the "Gifts" and the 'Fruit', is!

The Lord God has manifested Himself in three forms. Three different forms, but one and the same Person! This mystic truth is lucidly expounded in this Biblical verse:

"For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one"

(I John

5:7)

1. God, the Father!

Isaiah 66:1 and Acts 7:49 portray God's colossal and universal stature through His own words: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool." Hebrews 11:27 describes the Lord as "invisible". Jeremiah 23:23,24 inform us that God, being omnipresent and all pervasive, fills Heaven and earth. Again, I Timothy 6:16 gives a marvellous portrayal of God, thus:

Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see..."

As we have already seen, God, the Father is an embodiment of 'Power everlasting' and 'Love incomparable' interlocked. The invisible God, the Father personally came down to the earth in human form in the name of "Jesus", so that man can directly witness and realise both His mighty power and matchless love.

Once the world famous film director, Cecil B. DeMille was making a film. A particular sequence required the re-cording of the sound of a human head dashing on the ground. His recording assistants tried to simulate the sound by dropping various objects on to the floor, but the sound effect was not satisfactory. Cecil B. DeMille, struck by a sudden brain flash, ordered his technicians to be ready; assuring them of a perfect recording, he did something totally unexpected. To everybody's horror and amazement, he threw himself down, banging his own head on the floor. The resounding "Thud" did the trick! The assembled assistants were frozen with fear. They feared internal bleeding and blood clotting in the head of their boss; but, fortunately there was no mishap!

Quite so, the Father, the Almighty God Himself came down in the human form 'banging' Himself on to the cross to reveal His true identity to mankind.

2. Jesus Christ, the Son!

Matthew 1:23, I Timothy 3:16 and Romans 9:5 declare with one accord that Jesus Christ is, 'God manifested in flesh.' Our dear Lord Jesus Christ Himself confirms this in John 14:9 : "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." Again in John 10:30, He says, "I and My Father are one." True! Colossians 1:15 and Hebrews 1:3 describe Jesus Christ as 'the image of the invisible God; the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.' In our Lord Jesus Christ's life too, power and love were intermingled. He was on the one side, 'a Prophet mighty in

word and deed' (Luke 24:19) and on the other side, a person of profound compassion. Jesus Christ came down into this world 'to fulfil the will of God', as pointed out in Hebrews 10:7,9. Hebrews 10:10 explains what the will of God was.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"

True! The only purpose of His descent upon this earth was to offer His body as a 'living sacrifice' on the cross and to shed His innocent blood for the iniquities of mankind. Leviticus 17:11 and Hebrews 9:22, both confirm that without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. I Peter 1:19 and Acts 20:28 emphasise the same fact. The Lord came down to the earth in the name of "Jesus" and shed His innocent blood. As assured in 1 John 1:7, even today the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has the power to cleanse us from all our sins. Jesus Christ died, rose up from the dead and ascended into Heaven. Thus, He fulfilled His greatest mission of salvation on earth. From there, He has sent to the mankind the two gifts, mentioned below.

a) The Holy Spirit!

As mentioned in John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, it was Jesus Christ who specifically requested God, the Father to send the Holy Spirit to mankind, as a Comforter.

b) The 'Gifts' of grace!

"You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God might dwell there" (Ps. 68:18)

As indicated in the verse quoted above, He paved the way for God to pour down His Holy Spirit on the undeserving mankind, so that the rebellious humanity can receive the precious "Gifts" through the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:7,8 also reiterate the same fact. Hebrews 9:12 and 10:19,21 both give a wonderful and dramatic picture of how the resurrected Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven. When Jesus entered the Holy presence of the Lord of hosts, He carried in His two hands His own blood shed for mankind. He poured His blood before the Almighty, seated on the throne of grace and pleaded, "Father, I have shed My innocent blood for mankind on the earth and have bought them with a price (I Cor. 6:20 ; 7:23). From now on, they all belong to You. So please grant them Your "Gifts"; only then will they be able to substitute My place on the earth. Otherwise to

whom will the people suffering from diseases, the broken-hearted, the ones battling against the grip of sin and evil habits, those tormented by the evil spirits and those who are struggling with the thorns of life turn for help and comfort?" Consequently the Holy Spirit, the Comforter along with His "Gifts" and His 'Fruit' descended on the earth from God, the Father.

When Oliver Cromwell ruled England as its Lord Protector, brushing aside monarchy (for the first and only time in English History) he controlled the republic with an iron hand. Once he passed a death sentence against a young soldier for indiscipline. The verdict was: "Shoot him down tomorrow evening at the chiming of the evening bells of the Church of St. Mary."

Accordingly, next evening, the young man was taken to an open place for execution by a firing squad. His hands were tied up and his eyes blindfolded. Cromwell and his soldiers were waiting for the chimes of the church bells. Evening faded away into night; but still, no sound of the bells. Cromwell was baffled and the victim himself was puzzled. Just then a young girl came running from somewhere and stood before Cromwell. There were bleeding wounds on her head, hands and also all over her body. Unable to speak, she raised her two bleeding, pleading hands.

Cromwell understood what had happened in an instant. The young girl, the fiancée of the condemned soldier, shocked by the death sentence had decided to save her fiancé at any cost. She had climbed up the turret of the church bell and waited for the sexton to ring the bell. When the bell was rung, she caught hold of the massive tongue of the bell with both her hands. The deaf sexton went on pulling the rope of the bell below. The large bell rocked the clinging girl from one side to the other raining injuries on her hands and head. The muffled bell had disappointed Cromwell; but when he saw the grievously bruised hands and head of the supplicating girl, his heart softened.

He revoked the death sentence passed against her fiancé! In spite of the excruciating pain, the girl had hung on to the swaying tongue of the large bell to save the life of her fiancé!

Yes! Like this brave girl, our Lord Jesus Christ submitted His body to be nailed on the cross. Blood flowed profusely from His head, hands and feet. The sight of the blood of Jesus moves God

to compassion and even today, to His faithful seekers, God grants remission of sins and fills them with the Holy Spirit, showering His "Gifts" on them.

3. The Holy Spirit!

Who is the Holy Spirit? The answer is quite simply provided in II Corinthians 3:17:

"Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"

True! The invisible God came down to this earth in the name of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit too, reflecting the nature of God, is an embodiment of Power on the one hand and Grace and Love, on the other. The following verse illustrates the power of the Holy Spirit:

"So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun; when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him"

(Is.59:19)

Another name which the Bible gives the Holy Spirit is 'The Spirit of Grace' (Zech. 12:10 ; Heb: 10:29).

Yes! The Holy Spirit is a conglomeration of power and love, knitted together. He imparts the power of God on the one hand (Acts 1:8) and on the other hand, pours the love of God into the hearts of the people, as testified in Romans 5:5:

"...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us"

In other words, the Holy Spirit adorns the servants of God with His 'Gifts' to strengthen their souls and renew them with fresh power. At the same time He grants them the 'Fruit' of Love, so that their nature is completely transformed and becomes one with the nature of God, as revealed in I John 4:17.

I Corinthians 12:11 says that He distributes the "Gifts" to each one of us as He wills. To do this, He employs two yardsticks, as it were to measure the individual capacity of each to receive the "Gifts".

a) The proportion of faith!

The Holy Spirit grants the "Gifts" to people, in proportion of each individual's depth of faith (Rom. 12:6). It is quite comprehensible that if the "Gifts" are given out of proportion to the individual's capacity of faith, they would do more harm than good.

When my son Paul was a small boy, he used to express his childish desire to shave his face too, watching me shave my face; I used to stop him saying that he could do it after growing up! One day, in my absence, he had attempted to use the razor! You can imagine what could have happened! Cuts and bruises all over his face and body!

Yes! The "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit are as sharp as a razor's edge. If we do not have the proportionate standard of faith to use them, they will have an adverse effect on us.

b) The dimension of the ministerial call!

The "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit are given us with the primary objective of empowering us to do the ministry of Christ. So they are given in accordance with the kind of ministry we have been called for and the measure of our involvement in that ministry. Now let us consider the five different kinds of ministries for Christ.

(i) Apostles! (Messengers of God par excellence)

"Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds"
(II Cor. 12:12)

This is the Biblical definition of an apostle. All the nine "Gifts" and 'Fruit' of the Holy Spirit will be manifested in the life of an apostle.

(ii) Prophets! (Messengers of God inspired by the Holy Spirit)

As recorded in Luke 24:19, the prophet too will be mighty in word and deed, well endowed with all the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the apostles and prophets are the foundation stones of the church. As reminded by I Corinthians 13:2, however in the lives of the prophets, the gift of prophecy, the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge will co-exist conspicuously excelling other gifts. Only through these "Gifts" they are able to communicate with God (Num.12:6-8), understand His will and proclaim the words of God to the people.

(iii) Evangelists! (Messengers of God proclaiming the good news)

The following verse defines quite clearly the ministry of an evangelist:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad

tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, your God reigns!" (Is. 52:7)

In Acts 8:6-8, we get an idea of the ministry of Philip, the evangelist. In every evangelist's life, the three gifts - the gifts of healings, the gift of faith and the gift of the working of miracles will co-exist in a predominant measure.

(iv) Teachers! (Messengers of God endowed with His perfect counsel)

Acts 20:28 and 18:25,28 define the ministry of these servants of God. The revelation - oriented gifts of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, abound in their lives and help to teach them profound truths. II Timothy 2:24-26 tell us that the 'Fruit' of the Spirit should be an additional asset to them.

(v) Pastors! (Shepherds)

The ministry of a pastor is precisely defined, in a nutshell, by the following verse:

"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you"

(Heb. 13:17)

All the pastors should show concern about the salvation of every soul coming under his care. They are the people who should guarantee the spiritual growth, salvation and the ultimate entry into Heaven of every soul in their folds. Therefore they should possess the 'Fruit' of the Spirit, 'Love'. Did not Jesus, the chief Shepherd (I Peter 5:4) exhibit the Fruit of 'Love' when He said thus?

"...I lay down My life for the sheep"

(John

10:15)

Several years ago, affected by a severe illness, I was almost at the point of death. The elderly pastor S.P. Daniel, who was always concerned about our family, on coming to know about my fatal illness hurriedly came to see me. kneeling beside my bed, he prayed with tears thus: "O Lord, I am 67 and quite old. This suffering young man is only 34. Lord, I have completed Your ministry in my life. So, kindly let all diseases in this young man's physique be transmitted to me; let me die! Restore him to life! Let him live many more years to do Your ministry."

This is the true love of a pastor! Perhaps some pastors may not outwardly seem to possess the "Gifts". But if they pray for their sheep with love and compassion, God will certainly listen to them and whatever they ask for, for their sheep will definitely be granted by Him. The following verse makes it quite obvious:

"Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, to heaven"

(II Chr. 30:27)

The Major Categories of 'Gifts'!

1. Gifts for communication with the Lord!

- a) The gift of speaking different kinds of tongues!**
- b) The gift of the interpretation of tongues!**
- c) The gift of prophecy!**

2. Gifts of receiving revelations from the Lord!

- a) The gift of the word of wisdom!**
- b) The gift of the word of knowledge!**
- c) The gift of discerning of spirits!**

3. Gifts of revelation of the Lord's power!

- a) The gift of faith!**
- b) The gifts of healings!**
- c) The gift of the working of miracles!**

Ways of Receiving 'Gifts'!

1. Receiving 'Gifts' directly from God!

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you..." (I Cor. 11:23)

"For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Christ" (Gal.1:12)

When the Lord gave His call to Jeremiah to become a prophet, He spoke to him as below:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; and I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5)

Is it not therefore obvious that when God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, He Himself would have directly showered on him the gift of prophecy!

In the 16th century, there was a king called Barah, in the State of Gujarat in India. Even when he was still a child, his parents anticipating deadly conspiracies of jealous enemies against his life, planned to immunise him from the harmful effects of poison. They administered small doses of poison to him, increasing the dosage gradually. He was so well fortified against poison that even a little sweat in his face would kill a mosquito or an insect sitting on his face.

If human parents provide this kind of protection to their sons so systematically, how much more would God plan for the equipment of His chosen ministers! He will definitely shield them with the "Gifts" required for their particular ministries.

2. Receiving 'Gifts' through laying on of hands!

"Therefore I remind to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (II Tim. 1:6)

This verse clearly indicates that people receive the "Gifts" when the chosen vessels of God lay their hands on them and bless them.

Nearly 28 years ago, there lived a holy servant of God in a small town Mephrol, in the State of Kerala in South India. He

was popularly known as the 'Mephrol Master'. When I was on a visit to that part of Kerala, his son, who always had a great affection for me, invited me to his house to pray for his father's life as he was on his deathbed. When I went near the old man's bed, I was thunderstruck to see a divine shine on his face. When he saw me, he straightaway asked me to kneel down near his bed and laying his hands on my head, he blessed me and prayed for me for half - hour, urging God to give me His "Gifts" and to use me in His ministry in a great way. For the last 30 years, I have been continuously witnessing the answers of that old saint's fervent prayer.

Yes! When God's saints and chosen vessels lay their hands on our heads, bless us and pray for us, God will graciously send His "Gifts" to us.

3. Receiving 'Gifts' through prophecy!

Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery"
(I Tim. 4:14)

My son Paul, at the age of 18, had the experience of salvation, and being anointed by the Holy Spirit. From that age, onwards, he started doing God's ministry, giving his testimony in various places. After completing his Doctorate in Business Management, he began to involve himself totally in the Lord's ministry, preaching along with me in "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings and looking after various facets of the ministry God has given me. However he was continually fasting and praying for the full operation of the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit in his life.

On 2nd October 1994, we had a special fasting prayer meeting as a preparation for a particular good news meeting, along with 300 chosen prayer warriors. All of a sudden, the Spirit of the Lord descended on us mightily and a clear specific prophecy was given about my son:

"Son, from today I bestow on you the "Gifts" I have given to your father, in double measure. I will use you just as I used Elisha twice as much as Elijah."

Accordingly all the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit descended on his life too and the Lord is using him mightily with doubled power.

Yes, through prophecy too, God showers the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit to His servants.

Can God Give All the Nine 'Gifts' to an Individual?

Yes! It is quite possible! Shall we consider some evidences to get this point clarified?

1. God is never partial!

Only because St. Paul enjoyed all these nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit, he was able to define them (I Cor. 12:1). God does not show any partiality (Rom.2:11; Acts 10:34). So it is certain that God is ever ready to grant all the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit to anyone who earnestly seeks and prays for them. Has He not promised us,

"..ask, and it shall be given to you... For everyone who asks receives..." (Luke 11:9,10)

2. The case of the apostles and prophets!

It is imperative that those who are called to be apostles and prophets possess all these "Gifts". Because through them only the churches are built (Eph. 2:20); they are the true ambassadors for Christ! (II Cor. 5:20). People will seek their help in their need (I Sam. 9:6,9). Only if they have all the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit and the 'Fruit' of the Spirit, God will be able to meet the needs of the people who seek their help!

Several years ago, a world renowned evangelist had been to Korea. Multitudes of people flocked not only to hear him preach, but to get healed as well. When informed of the desire of the people, he frankly, without any hesitation, said: "I don't have the grace of praying for healing."

True! Unless we have all the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit, we cannot pave the way for the Spirit of God to meet all the needs of all the people. And the eager people will return disappointed!

3. All the "Gifts" are interlinked as they operate!

Receiving all the nine "Gifts" is quite possible, because they are all mutually interlinked. Consider what the Holy Bible tells us about the gift of prophecy.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (I Cor. 13:2)

When the gift of prophecy is in action, other "Gifts" too have

to be in operation.

The famous servant of God, John G. Lake, who with his gifts of healings, brought healing from the Lord to millions of people, had this spiritual experience once. After a special prayer meeting in a church, a few complained that they had not been healed. After praying with them again, he revealed to each one of them the hurdles in their lives, which forbade their healing. When the people realised and rectified those faults, they received the healing from the Lord immediately.

How did John G. Lake make it possible? To point out the defects in the lives of the people, he brought into operation the other "Gifts" - the gift of the word of wisdom, the gift of the word of knowledge and the gift of faith. When these gifts interacted with the gifts of healings and the gift of the working of miracles, miracles were performed. So we should not forget that the "Gifts" are all interlinked.

4. God is a liberal giver!

The Bible speaks of God as,
"...the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17)

According to Matthew 7:11, God gives 'good things' to those who ask for them.

For example, Elisha pleaded with his master Elijah, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me" (II Kings 2:9). Accordingly he received double portion of his master's spirit.

a) Daniel!

Consider the case of Daniel and his friends! We read their story in Daniel 1:17,20.

"As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm"

Daniel's wisdom was ten times greater than that of all the magicians and astrologers subject to the king, put together. God gave Daniel and his friends abundant wisdom, unasked; because God, out of His great concern for His people, the Jewish slaves, wanted Daniel to support and defend them. Similarly our Lord grants the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit to

individuals abundantly to suit the needs and exigencies of a particular situation.

b) St. Paul!

St. Paul laboured harder and experienced more bitter tribulations than others, for Christ as testified by these verses:

"... I laboured more abundantly than they all..."

(I Cor. 15:10)

"... I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often"

(11

Cor. 11:23)

At the same time, St. Paul had his heavenly consolation too!

"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ"

(II Cor. 1:5)

Is it not certain then, that, even as St. Paul was consoled and strengthened with God's gifts of grace, those who labour for Him amidst tribulations will be strengthened with all the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit?

There was a great pastor in Villupuram, a town in South India, named Swaminathan. Blessed with the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit, he laboured with tears and great burden among the villagers; countless people were healed and were delivered from evil spirits. He had the Lord's power in him to raise up even the dead to life! But his wife was very worldly and had no interest at all in the pastor's ministry; she had a deformed hand.

The pastor died, quite unexpectedly, leaving his wife and seven children. His wife was baffled; she wrote to eleven of her relatives seeking their help, but none responded. Broken-hearted, she cried bitterly at the feet of the Lord in repentance and begged for His mercy and help. The Holy Spirit descended on her; she received the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit, particularly the gift of prophecy. That is all! The poor woman became a powerful servant of God- more powerful than her deceased husband. The Lord mightily used her, till her death, performing countless wonders and signs through her.

Yes! Our Lord gives more than we desire and more than what we dare to ask Him. So, there is nothing wrong in requesting Him to bless us with all the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit abundantly.

5. Dichotomy in the operation of 'Gifts'!

Sometimes we find that the same gift operates in different individuals in several ways, as explained in this verse:

"...But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that" (I Cor. 7:7)

Take, for example, the gifts of healings. Millions of people gather to listen to Dr. T.L. Osborn wherever he goes, all over the world. So it is quite impossible for him to pray for them individually. So he preaches in such a manner as to focus their entire attention on the healing power of the word of God; he also has absolute faith in the healing power of God (Ps. 107:20; Is. 55:11). Our Lord too with deep compassion heals innumerable people, as he intercedes for them, instantly.

The great servants of God, Charles Price and Smith Wigglesworth anointed the ailing people with oil and prayed for them individually in accordance with Mark 6:13 and the Lord healed them.

Great preachers like Kathryn Kuhlman and Benny Hinn have been led to anticipate the coming down of the Holy Spirit in person to heal the sick. True to their faith, the Holy Spirit comes down and thrills the people with His signs and wonders.

Thus the same unitary gift - the gifts of healings - operates in several ways in the ministry of different servants of God. Though endowed with this unitary gift (the gifts of healings), sometimes, we do not understand how gift operates in our ministries. Even when the gifts of healings operate in our ministries, a particular section of people may be touched; another section may go untouched. That is why we should ask God for all the nine "Gifts". It may look childish, if we ask our Lord just for one or two gifts.

6. The grace of God that grants 'Gifts' is limitless!

Meditate upon the following passages:

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us..." (Rom. 12:6)

"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph. 4:7)

Thus the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit seep into us through the boundless grace of God. John 1:16 tells us:

"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace"

As Christ is waiting to give those who love Him 'grace for

grace', there is nothing wrong in asking for all the nine "Gifts" (Rom. 11:29). At this juncture, I remember an amusing story!

A small boy accompanied his mother on a shopping spree. As his mother was in the interior of the shop picking up the required articles, this boy was staring at the chocolate jar on the shopkeeper's table. Noticing this, the shopkeeper invited the boy to take as many chocolates as he wished. But the boy did not respond. In spite of repeated offers, the small boy refused to take the chocolates, though his longing eyes were kept riveted to the jar.

After a while the mother came up to settle her bill. Once again the shopkeeper made his offer; but at this time he himself opened the jar, picked up a handful and offered the chocolates to the boy. To his utter amazement and that of the boy's mother, the boy accepted quite cheerfully the chocolates with both his extended hands. He picked up even one or two chocolates spilled over.

On their way home, the mother asked her son as to why he accepted the chocolates, while he had made a big fuss all along. You know what the boy said! "Mummy, if I had taken the chocolates myself, I would have picked only a few with my small hand. Now, see how many more I have got!"

Let us also, like that small boy, receive a big handful of all the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit through His perfect grace - 'grace for grace'(John 1:16); 'all (kinds of) grace' (II Cor. 9:8). Then only we can have a wholesome ministry!

The Blessings of the 'Gifts'!

Let us now, ponder over various types of blessings emanating from the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit.

1. The 'Gifts' bring the presence of God!

"...You have received gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell there"
(Ps. 68:18)

This verse makes it obvious that if the "Gifts" descending on us should become operative, it is essential that the Lord our God has to be present in us constantly; because it is only He who can operate the "Gifts" perfectly. Is He not the author and source of the "Gifts"? (James 1:17).

During the times of the cold war between the U.S.A. and Russia, the most effective fighting plane was the Russian MIG. Once the Americans, somehow, managed to smuggle a MIG plane into the U.S.A, in order to study its secrets. However persistent they were in trying to operate it, they could not make it function at all! The simple reason was that they did not possess the 'MIG Operating Manual'.

Yes, without the presence of God, the 'Guide Book', we won't know how to operate the "Gifts". He, the author and source of the "Gifts" alone can guide us. Is it not then the best way to ask for and enjoy His presence all the 24 hours of the day? Yes! The presence of the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit in our lives makes it obligatory for the Lord God to come and dwell in us. Then why should we be indifferent to this privilege?

2. The 'Gifts' grant us the privilege of helping others!

The next blessing of the "Gifts" is the provision of an opportunity to serve the people.

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38)

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people"
(Matt. 9:35)

These two verses throw light on how Jesus served and helped thousands of needy people by casting away their maladies. Even today, people seek us only with the expectation that we,

through the power of God will cater to their needs. To meet their expectations through God, we definitely require all the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit.

Once in one of the main roads of Madras, a man from another town tried to commit self immolation by pouring kerosene all over his body. Fortunately the Police saved him by putting out the fire. When questioned as to why he indulged in this horrible attempt, he explained that he had come all the way to Madras to meet the Chief Minister, who alone could redress his problems with justice. Though he tried persistently to meet the Chief Minister, he was not permitted to do so. So, instead of going home empty-handed he had decided to immolate himself.

Yes, just so, people come in search of God's servants to find a solution for their problems. They come with the absolute faith that we, through the grace of God, would provide solutions for their difficulties. It is imperative therefore for the servants of God to be filled with the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit to help these people.

3. The 'Gifts' grant us firm solidification of our ministry!

"And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did"
(Acts 8:6)

"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20)

These two verses explain that the "Gifts" are endowed to us as a symbol of the upliftment and conferment of honour and recognition to our ministry. Is it not true that God granted Moses the grace to perform three distinctive miracles mentioned in Exodus 4:1-9 to confirm His power to Moses himself, His people, the Jews and later the King of Egypt, Pharaoh?

In the United States of America, God appeared to a servant of God by name, Tommy Hicks and urged him to do His ministry in Argentina, a totally strange country to him. Further, to Hicks that was a first call for such a ministry. Worse still, Argentina had barred its doors against Christian missionaries. However, armed with the unparalleled 'Faith' given by God, Hicks journeyed to Argentina. He first met the Dictator of that

country, Juan Peron and explained to him why the Lord had sent him there.

Peron shot a straight forward question: "Will your God heal my disease?" Without any hesitation, whatsoever, Hicks filled with the Spirit of God, replied: "Certainly, yes!" Peron stripped his upper garments and displayed to Hicks his horrible skin disease. Immediately, moved by great compassion, Hicks pleaded fervently with God to heal him. God too heard him and lo, the skin disease disappeared dramatically. In sheer ecstatic delight Peron embraced and hugged the servant of God. He provided all facilities for Hicks to do his ministry. In fact, he opened up his whole country for God's ministry!

4. The 'Gifts' are for our personal benefits too!

Consider this Biblical verse:

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all" (I Cor. 12:7)

Just as the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit assist us to help the suffering people, they guide us personally too, fetching us the invaluable presence of God, leading us with their kindly light through the valley of darkness and consoling us at times of despair and sorrow. So, there are personal benefits, as well!

The Lord has entrusted me 19 kinds of different ministries. So it is quite usual that at least one problem from any one ministry would encounter me everyday. To tackle each problem, then and there, I have to draw on heavily from the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit. Not merely in our ministries do the "Gifts" sustain us, but in our personal lives too!

After my son, Paul, had graduated in Science (Bachelor of Science), what studies he should pursue further became a topic of discussion in our home. Some suggested M.Sc. course; a few advised his joining M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration) programme. A close friend of mine was of the view that he should prepare himself for C.A. (Chartered Accountancy) course. I was simply baffled!

One day, I was praying filled with God's Spirit at the feet of Jesus. Quite suddenly an angel stood near me and showed me a vision of a tall and majestic Paul of the future. Moreover the angel directed me clearly and specifically that Paul should do his M.B.A. programme and then continue his Doctoral Research Work (Ph.D.). Though many educational institutions would invite him to be on their staff, he would only turn to God's ministry, earning fame and recognition. This was God's plan for

him, according to the angel.

This divine prophecy was fully fulfilled. Today he is an M.B.A. and Ph.D. degree holder! Because of the wisdom thus gained, today, he has become the Chief Administrator of both Karunya Institute of Technology and "Jesus Calls" International Ministry. Our Lord is showering on him His 'grace for grace', empowering him to superintend all the 19 facets of our Lord's ministry.

Yes! The "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit can help us in our personal and domestic spheres also, guiding us to formulate decisions, according to the will of God!

What are the Characteristics We Should Possess to Receive the 'Gifts' of the Holy Spirit?

1. An unquenchable thirst!

The primary quality that should be found in us for receiving the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit is an unquenchable thirst for them. Look at this verse:

"For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring." (Is.44:3)

There is a proverb to the effect that one man is enough to take a horse to water, but not even twenty would suffice to drag it to the water, when it is not thirsty. In the same way, unless we thirst intensely after these "Gifts", we cannot receive them. Let me give you a personal witness and example.

On 10.10.1962, I was anointed with the Holy Spirit. I encountered Jesus face to face for three long hours! I was overwhelmed by an indescribable celestial joy. My heart was overflowing with a divine exultation constantly.

One day, my father and a few elders from our church went to pray for a young Christian boy, who was seriously ill, fighting for his life. I too accompanied my father. We all knelt down to pray. To my utter dismay, none prayed for his miraculous healing. Anticipating his inevitable death, they prayed with deep concern for his parents and relatives, who would need consolation after his anticipated death. To be frank, I was totally disappointed with their lack of faith for that boy's miraculous healing.

I didn't know what to do or how to pray. In my desperation I pleaded: "O Lord, great ministers like Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborn and William Branham are able to raise up such dying people through their prayer of faith, in America. Why not in our country, Lord? Lord, raise such great ministers who can do such miracles in India too." I prayed thus with great agony in my heart. At this point, the presence of the Holy Spirit surrounded me. Again and again I heard the thunderous voice of God telling me, "You are that man!"

Yes, when we are deeply moved by compassion for the suffering and the sick, when the awareness of our utter helplessness to help them shatters our heart and when we pray with agony and thirst, our Lord will fill us with all the nine

"Gifts" and perform miracles in our ministry.

2. Humility!

The second virtue that should exist in us to qualify us for the receiving of all the nine "Gifts" is humility. Please study these Biblical passages:

"For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and a humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones'" (Is. 57:15)

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps.51:10)

"...but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6)

"...he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11)

All these verses reveal that God will exalt those who lead their lives with humility in the sight of God and men, and dwell in them.

Once when I was chatting with a Spirit-filled servant of God, he surprised me by asserting at length, "I do not believe in these signs and wonders. I do not pray for the sick ... etc." When I questioned him why, he said: "The greatest miracle in the world is the salvation of a sinner into a new creature in Christ (II Cor. 5:17). It is just enough if this miracle occurs in our ministry; other miracles are unnecessary."

In the same breath, let me narrate to you an episode in the life of a great English missionary William Carey, to bring out his humility. He was the man who mastered many Indian languages and translated the Holy Bible into these languages. The British Government treated him with special honour, as he was the one who translated the Government's orders into Bengali language. Any Governor - designate from England was instructed to meet and greet Carey in India before taking charge.

This kind of official honour irritated a rich man and out of sheer envy he once shouted at Carey, "William Carey, don't forget that you were, after all, a shoemaker in England!" Calmly, Carey replied, "No, I was not a shoemaker, I was only a cobbler!" He made his living in England by mending shoes, while he was at the same time doing God's ministry. This kind

of humility earned him God's 'grace for grace'. Though he departed from this world, 100 years ago, he still lives in the hearts of millions of Indians.

Well! The dichotomy between the respective attitudes of the former and the latter is like the difference between a molehill and a mountain. Let us imprint the following verse in our minds firmly and adorn ourselves with the spirit of humility. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"(James 4:6).

In 1961, I attended a special prayer meeting arranged for the anointment of the Holy Spirit. Hundreds of people were blessed with the anointment. A young man, seated in the row ahead of me was also anointed with the Holy Spirit in an overflowing manner, as I could easily see. The witness he gave later touched my heart. He said, "I prayed to God: 'O Lord, if You don't anoint me now, I will back- slide in my spiritual life.' The next instant the Lord anointed me!"

Shall we also humble ourselves like this young man to receive the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit?

3. Prayer!

Let us concentrate on the following verses!

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

(Luke 11:13)

"...men always ought to pray and not lose heart"

(Luke 18:1)

These verses teach us that we should beseech our Lord to impart His "Gifts" to us, without ceasing and without losing heart. After referring to all His promises in store for the Israelites, God finally said,

"Thus says the Lord GOD: I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock"

(Ezek. 36:37)

Not only that! Our Lord has given us a great and wonderful promise:

"...ask, and it will be given to you..."

For everyone who asks receives..." (Luke 11:9,10)

The Amplified Bible puts it thus:

"Ask and keep on asking. Everyone who keeps on asking will receive"

So, let us not pray for the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit a few days and then lose heart. We should 'ask and keep on asking'. Then the Lord will recognise our steadfast yearning and send the "Gifts" to us.

Let me present before you the example of Smith Wigglesworth of England. One day, filled with the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, he started talking in different tongues. And then, for a long time, he did not get the same spiritual experience. One day, again quite suddenly, as he was walking along a road, he received the same experience.

You know what he did! He stopped then and there, right on the road, and prayed: "O Lord, I give You thanks for this gift of speaking different kinds of tongues. But grant me O Lord, the gift of the interpretation of tongues as well (I Cor. 14:13). I will not budge an inch until You give me that!" The compassionate Lord mercifully bestowed on him the gift of the interpretation of tongues in addition to the gift of speaking different kinds of tongues abundantly (I Cor. 14:18), seeing his firm stand to receive it at any cost.

Quite so, let us keep on asking, pestering our Lord, until He adorns us with the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit.

"He has made everything beautiful in its time..."

(Eccl. 3:11)

"...for every matter there is a time..."

(Eccl. 8:6)

Accordingly, God will listen to our prayers in His time and He will fill us with His "Gifts". Till then we too shall not rest or give Him any rest (Is. 62:7).

Upliftment to Our Ministries!

When the "Gifts" overflow in us and operate in our ministries, God expands the ministries entrusted to us by Him. He will exalt us and our ministries, giving us additional responsibilities.

For instance, consider the life of St. Paul, again. Transformed into an evangelist overnight (Acts 9:20), from the very next day of his seeing a miraculous vision of the Lord Jesus, who spoke to him and drew him to His side, he started his ministry witnessing everywhere that Jesus is Christ. Days rolled on. The Lord who saw that 'he was faithful' (I Tim. 1:12), made him 'a teacher and a prophet' (Acts 13:1).

Next, He entrusted him with the ministry of a shepherd, making him 'Father' (I Cor. 4:15) to all. Gradually, he was appointed an apostle - 'for which I was appointed an apostle' (I Tim. 2:7 ; II Tim. 1:1,11). Let us all seek this upliftment in our ministries! Let us also yearn persistently for the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit! Our Lord will certainly exalt us and our ministries, if we submit ourselves to Him with humility. *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time"* (1 Pet. 5:6)

Well! Now let us proceed to study the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit, in detail.

I feel that it would be better if we study the unique excellence of each gift in the following order!

1. Gifts for communication with the Lord!

- a) **The gift of speaking different kinds of tongues!**
- b) **The gift of the interpretation of tongues!**
- c) **The gift of prophecy!**

2. Gifts of receiving revelations from the Lord!

- a) **The gift of the word of wisdom!**
- b) **The gift of the word of knowledge!**
- c) **The gift of discerning of spirits!**

3. Gifts of revelation of the Lord's power!

- a) **The gift of faith!**
- b) **The gifts of healings!**
- c) **The gift of the working of miracles!**

May the Lord Himself be present with you, as you read the following chapters and meditate upon the truths about the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit! May He Himself expound to you each gift in a very crystal clear way! May He make you rejoice by adorning you with all the nine "Gifts", of the Holy Spirit, a priceless treasure!

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1. The Gift of Speaking Different Kinds of Tongues!

Biblical Reference : I Corinthians 12:10

As we read in Genesis 3:8,9, the Lord God who created Adam, the first man and his wife Eve, spoke to them, 'walking in the cool of the day' in the Garden of Eden. Long after their tragic 'Fall', God 'walked and talked' with a few chosen people, who were after His own heart. Some of these people are:

Enoch (Gen.5:24)

Noah (Gen.6:9)

Abraham (James 2:23)

Moses (Ex.33:11 ; Num.7:89 ; 12:8)

David (Acts 13:22)

The reason for this close communion of God with His saints is spelt out clearly in Deuteronomy 33:3: "Yes, He loves the people ; they sit down at Your feet; every one receives Your words." God wants to talk to His people; He also wants His people to converse with Him. Isaiah 28:11 explains one of the means used by Him to communicate with this people:

"...with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people"

Yes! What the Bible refers to as 'different kinds of tongues' are 'the unknown languages' or 'other tongues' employed by God to talk to us in a supernatural manner. Who can question Him for choosing such a channel? God's wisdom concerning "tongues" is unquestionable. God is all powerful and He "holds your breath in His hand" (Dan.5:23). Yes! "Our God is in Heaven; He does whatever He pleases" (Ps. 115:3).

Even the great King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled the entire world exclaimed with wonder and awe about God's actions!

...He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"
(Dan.4:35)

So also the great man of God, Job said: "Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'" (Job 9:12). St. Paul, too, exclaims in amazement, while pondering over the several ways in which God deals with man, in Romans 11:33,34: "How unsearchable

are His judgments and

His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counsellor?" So, if it is the will of God to make use of 'stammering lips and unknown tongue' to converse with human beings, what right do we have to question Him?

Yes! How can we explain and illustrate His manner of using unknown languages to speak to us and His power of enabling us to speak different tongues? How can we comprehend His wisdom? Whatever the Lord does in the lives of His children has only one excellent objective. That noble objective is to make us 'partakers of His divine nature' (II Pet. 1:4). His desire is that, in this world, we should be like Him in word and deed, as revealed in I John 4:17. Does not the Bible say in II Corinthians 3:18 that His great longing is to transform us 'from glory to glory', into His own image? Therefore, the primary objective of His granting us the gift of speaking different kinds of tongues through the Holy Spirit, is to transform our very nature completely into His own.

The Sign of a Perfect Man!

James 3:2 informs us that the outstanding sign of a perfect man, who has become a partaker of the divine nature of God is the marked change that comes over his tongue. It says:

"...If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body"

That is why the Lord touches our tongue first and perfects it, to transform us into perfect beings, reflecting His divine nature. The only way to achieve this transformation is to grant the gift of speaking different kinds of tongues. Well, let us consider the nature of the fleshly tongue of man, first. The tongue is the most important organ in the human body, because,

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue"
(Prov. 18:21)

Take, for example, the life of the prophet Elisha. He received the "Gift" of the Holy Spirit twice as much as the prophet Elijah had. Both death and life emanated from his tongue; in II Kings 2:24, we read that when Elisha pronounced a curse on the children who mocked at him, 'two female bears came out of the woods and mauled' forty two of them. With the same tongue, Elisha said to Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, who was sore afflicted with leprosy:

"Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."

Likewise Naaman was restored and he was clean (II Kings 5:10,14).

Certainly, death and life proceeded from Elisha's tongue. Yet our gracious Lord Jesus Christ says in Matthew 5:44:

"...bless those who curse you..."

He has also given us a command through His servant St. Paul:

"...bless and do not curse"
(Rom.12:14)

The Bible describes the nature of our physical tongue thus:

"With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God"

(James 3:9)

To instil in us His own divine quality of continually blessing

others, God desires to transform our tongue completely. Hence, this gift!

1. Our mortal tongue!

The descriptive imageries employed by the Bible to refer to our natural tongue are quite surprising. They are:

A sharp razor (Ps.52:2)

A sharp sword (Ps.57:4)

A serpent's tongue (Ps. 140:3)

An arrow shot out (Jer.9:8)

A fire (James 3:6)

A world of iniquity (James 3:6)

An unruly evil (James 3:8)

Full of deadly poison (James 3:8)

But it is our heart that decides the type of words articulated by our natural tongue. The following Biblical verse explains this fact clearly:

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks"

(Luke 6:45)

Every natural heart is full of evil! The Bible puts it thus:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer.17:9)

Even the Lord of lords, after creating man on this earth, expressed His agony over the heart of the fallen man, saying:

"...the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth..."

(Gen.8:21; 6:5)

So, before transforming a man's tongue, the Lord has, necessarily, to transform his heart!

2. A transformed heart!

...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (II Cor.5:17)

How sweet is this verse! According to Psalm 40:3, new songs of praise flow out of the life of a man, renewed by Jesus Christ. In order to keep on praising the Lord, the reformed heart yearns for new songs! These people with purified hearts will not only sing new songs, but 'speak with new tongues' as well, as promised by our gracious Lord, in Mark 16:17, before His ascension.

a) Spiritual processes for transformation of heart!

When a man realises that he is a 'sinner' and comes to Jesus, according to I John 1:7, He cleanses him from all sin with His precious blood. He cleanses the heart of a repentant sinner from 'all unrighteousness' (I John 1:9).

As mentioned in John 15:3, the disciples of Jesus had this exalted experience of purification of hearts, as He himself assured them: "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." Did not Jesus tell them with exultation thus? "Rejoice because your names are written in Heaven" (Luke 10:20). However, as it was necessary for them to continue to live with the divine nature, Jesus gave them this promise :

"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which' He said, you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:4,5)

In obedience to this command, they 'continued with one accord in prayer and supplication' (Acts 1:14).

"...when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:1-3)

These verses point out that the promise of the Lord Jesus to His disciples was fulfilled literally, don't they?

Yes! As mentioned in Isaiah 4:3,4, the Lord's 'Spirit of burning' descended on them and purified them completely. In Romans 5:5, we read that the love of God was 'poured out in their hearts' by the Holy Spirit. According to Ezekiel 36:25,26, He took 'the heart of stone' out of their flesh and gave them 'a new heart' and put a new spirit within them. They immediately inherited the nature of Christ, filled with the divine nature of God Himself. Acts 2:11 says, "They started speaking about the wonderful works of God, filled with the Holy Spirit." In Acts 10:46, we see that another group, the Gentiles, too were filled with the Holy Spirit and they too began to magnify God with their tongues.

Likewise, St. Paul, who was filled with the Holy Spirit abundantly and transformed, testified about himself in the end:

"...I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"

(Gal.6:17)

Even today, in order to give the same experience to us, the Lord bestows His Holy Spirit on us, filling our hearts with His love. When our hearts are touched by His 'Love', our tongues are transformed and they pour out divine blessings on others. Yes! People do see a great transformation in our lives.

The Characteristics of a Transformed Tongue!

1. Change in function!

Our tongue which had been engaged in meaningless affairs hitherto begins to get involved in a different kind of God-related work, once our heart is filled with the Holy Spirit.

The tongue begins to articulate supplications to the Lord (Ps.39:3).

All the day long, it begins to speak of the Lord's righteousness and His praise (Ps.35:28).

It speaks of God's word and commandments, with detailed explanation, continuously (Ps.119:172).

The word of truth abides in it constantly (Ps. 119:43).

The anointed servant of the Lord, David describes this spiritual experience thus:

"The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue" (II Sam. 23:2)

As mentioned in Acts 10:38 and John 3:34, did not the tongue of our merciful Lord Jesus, anointed immeasurably with the Holy Spirit, speak only 'gracious words?' (Luke 4:22)

2. Change in capacity!

After this divine experience, even naive people are given 'the tongue of the learned' (Is.50:4). Substantiating this new dynamism of the tongue, St. Paul says: "We speak with wisdom among those who are mature" (I Cor.2:6). The Spirit-filled tongue becomes authoritative (Is.54:17). Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, spoke 'as one having authority' and 'the people were astonished at His teaching', as testified in Matthew 7:28,29.

3. Change in appearance!

The Holy Bible provides many kinds of exalted images to describe the 'Form' of the transformed tongue such as:

Choice silver (Prov. 10:20)

Promoter of health (Medicine) (Prov.12:18)

A tree of life (Prov.15:4)

A gentle breaker of bone (Prov.25:15)

Only on such wholesome tongues transformed by the power

of the Holy Spirit, unknown languages or new languages appear as a sign of the experience of transfiguration.

Origin of 'Other Tongues' or 'New Tongues'!

When the Holy Spirit is poured into a heart, it experiences a divine joy (Rom.14:17). I Peter 1:8,9 explain this joy as 'inexpressible and full of glory'. The cause of this overflowing joy is the flooding in of God's incomparable love in our souls (Rom.5:5).

When I was a college student, my college would declare holidays quite suddenly, on and off. As I was the only son to my parents, my mother's thoughts were always about me. So even when the college declared a single day's holiday, I would take a train and reach home. Certain times, the train would reach my home town at 3 a.m. When I knocked at the door at such an unearthly hour, my mother, not anticipating my arrival, would open the door asking, 'Who's that? Who's that?' Purposely, I would not reply.

As there had been no prior intimation, she would stand dumbfounded, at the doorstep. Overwhelmed with excessive joy, her tongue would stammer out questions: "When did you arrive?... Have you had food?... If not, shall I prepare a meal now?" etc. etc. Stutteringly, she would utter many irrelevant matters. Was not the only reason for this incoherent talk, the amazement and delight created by the sudden unexpected appearance of her only son?

Similarly when the invisible God descends into us, in the form of the Holy Spirit, an ecstatic delight which the world cannot give, enters into our heart. Not only that! We receive a sensation that our Lord Jesus Himself has come down into our heart. This experience is what the Lord Jesus Christ explains as follows:

"At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20)

Who can control the great joy flooding into a man's heart, when he becomes aware that he has a vision of the Almighty God face to face? Which tongue will refrain from bursting out into the praise of God? The desire to praise Him is so excessive that even our mother tongue becomes inadequate. That is why our Lord compassionately places 'new tongues' on our fleshly tongue. We praise the Lord with exhilaration and with the 'new tongues'.

11.2.1955 was the day I totally surrendered myself to our Lord. Vexed by the stinging problems in my life, I was walking

towards the railway track to commit suicide; that was the time our Lord stopped me and won me over for Himself. I prayed, crying bitterly for four continuous hours, confessing my sins; my repentance was genuine. A divine peace which the world can never give, filled my heart. From the next day, I started proclaiming the love of Christ everywhere.

As days rolled on, I began to study the Bible diligently and with acute concentration. I got a job in a Bank! Along with my work, I continued to spend my time in an in-depth study of the Bible, night and day, and in sharing the love of God with other people.

With the passage of time, I began to develop an uncontrollable yearning to see and talk to our Lord face to face, as the Biblical saints did. As I was groping about to find a way, the following verse caught my eyes: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).

True! Jesus was the very Son of God. If He Himself needed the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit, how much more did I require this experience? Realising this I started to pray intently and incessantly, pleading with God: "O Lord, fill me too, with the anointment and power of the Holy Spirit."

On 9.10.1962, I immersed myself in prayer until twelve, midnight. In the end, this was my broken-hearted prayer:

How long! How long, O Lord, have I been pleading with You diligently and with tears for the anointment of the Holy Spirit? You have not been merciful to me; I am fed up with this lukewarm Christian life, which is 'neither cold nor hot' (Rev.3:16). Please take away my life, if You don't wish to fill me with the Holy Spirit today."

Next day, I returned home only at 9.30 p.m. in the night, quite exhausted, as I had a heavy load of work in my Bank. After supper, as usual, I knelt down for family prayer with my parents and two servants of God, husband and wife, Mrs. & Mr. J.S. Lemeur, who had come to pray for me. That was the moment God had chosen to fill me with His Holy Spirit. The whole room was flooded with God's presence. A new sensation which the world cannot give touched my body; my fatigue fled; a divine ecstasy pervaded my heart. Unable to control my exhilaration, I began to laugh aloud; I wondered within myself where this great joy could be coming from!

The next moment, the Lord opened my spiritual eyes; from Heaven a bright light flashed before me; I saw a majestic figure

standing in that light. He addressed me thus: "I am Jesus. Since you sought Me with your whole heart, I have Myself come down to bless you!" These words were like nectar to my ears, sweeter than honey. I gazed into His face and found that He was looking at me with great compassion, as a mother would look at her child. The tenderness and affection in His eyes thrilled my heart! The gentle smile on His face enthralled me and brought a divine joy into my heart. Involuntarily, I broke out into a peal of laughter. The more He smiled, the more I laughed and kept on laughing! Unable to control the supernatural joy, my tongue began to stammer.

Then my mind posed a question to me: "All these years, you have been searching for this Son of God. Now, He Himself has come down and is standing before you! Should you not thank Him?" As soon as this thought struck me, I began to thank Him. When I was trying to thank Him in my mother tongue and English, my tongue started talking 'other tongues'. Though this experience surprised me, it appeared very pleasing to me, not strange! However, I was a little baffled by the new tongues. Jesus, the Son of God, told me: "My son, it is I who make you talk in several tongues; this is the anointment of the Holy Spirit."

Yes! It is the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, who grants us the experience of speaking 'new tongues'. It is He who transforms our wicked tongue into a mellifluous one and turns it into a blessed tongue by giving it 'new tongues'. Did not our Lord say, "they will speak with 'new tongues'?" (Mark 16:17)

Other tongues!

"...with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people" (Is.28:11)

This verse indicates the two means utilised by God to speak to man.

Stammering lips; Another Tongue!

Normally, a new born baby attempts to talk to his or her parents only as the baby grows up; in the beginning we cannot make out what the baby says; we call it a child's prattle. Do we ever dislike it? Never! On the contrary, we listen to it with pleasure. Similarly when we are filled with God's Holy Spirit,

the surging joy in us prompts our tongue to praise God and the first expression is the 'prattling language' or 'stammering lips'. However, as Ephesians 5:18 says, when we are careful enough to continually dwell in the Holy Spirit, our stammering lips develop a clear coherent language. Yet these languages are neither our own mother tongue nor any language known to us; so we call them 'other tongues'.

Five Kinds of 'Other Tongues'!

1. The language of men! (I Cor. 13:1)

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance"
(I Cor. 14:10)

As pointed out in the Bible, even today, the languages spoken by mankind all over the world are numerous. There is a saying to the effect, that 'What we have learnt is a handful (of sand), while what we have not learnt yet is a globe!' True to this proverb, a few languages that we know can be counted on our fingers. So our Lord puts unknown languages in our tongues just to make us realise that the new tongues are the result of neither our own effort nor our wisdom but of His own power.

2. The language of angels! (I Cor. 13:1)

When the Israelites were led from Egypt towards the promised land, Canaan, in the wilderness, the Lord 'opened the doors of Heaven' and 'rained down manna' which was 'angels' food' (Ps.78:23-25). Is it not possible that there can be a 'special tongue' for the angels, just as there is a special food, manna, for them?

3. The language of Heaven! (II Cor.12:4)

When St. Paul describes one of his heavenly visions, he witnesses that he was 'caught up to the third Heaven', where he heard 'inexpressible words, not lawful for a man to utter!' So it may be that the other tongues which appear on our mortal tongue are the indescribable language of Heaven. Can't we guess this through the verse, II Corinthians 12:4?

4. The language of the Holy Spirit!

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses: For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered"
(Rom. 8:26)

Yes! When suffocated with grief, we stumble, not knowing what to pray for and how the Holy Spirit Himself descends on us and activates our tongues 'with groaning that cannot be uttered'. Do we ever understand this mystic truth?

I know a servant of God endowed with the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit, doing His ministry according to divine visions. One night when he was communing with God, the Holy Spirit, showing him a particular town, said to him, "Will you not go to this city?" When the servant of God questioned why he should go there, as he had only recently visited the city, the Holy Spirit showed him a vision. What he saw in the vision was the scenario where a God-fearing pastor who had entertained and helped the servant of God in his ministry, just in the recent past, was battling for life in his sickbed. Quite interestingly, the servant of God saw himself entering into the room; he cleared the room of the group of people assembled there and knelt down near the ailing pastor and cried out in prayer, after which he was restored to life. When he saw this vision, the servant of God promised God: "Well, my Lord, I will go", and then slept off.

Yet, the next day, when he went to attend to his secular job, he was so absorbed in it that he totally forgot this vision. All of a sudden, he received news that the servant he saw in the vision was indeed in deathbed; then only he recollected the divine vision. He rushed to that town, accompanied by a close friend of his. Exactly as he had seen in the vision, quite a lot of people were assembled there, pleading with God for his life in tears. When they were trying to give the pastor a spoonful of water, he could not drink even that much! This tragic spectacle touched the heart of the servant of God.

After sending away all the assembled people, the servant of God and his friend knelt down near the pastor's bed. Stifled with grief, he was wondering how he should pray, as he was at a loss for words; at that moment the Holy Spirit descended on him mightily; his tongue began to speak other tongues; he realised that the Holy Spirit was interceding for the sick pastor through him! God's power was over him for nearly one and a quarter hours. During this period, he saw five times the Holy Spirit descending, but going back without touching the ailing pastor. The servant of God cried bitterly within himself: "What is the reason Lord, for Your not touching him?" Only then did he realise that the thronging people had come back and were making a lot of noise.

So when, for the sixth time, the Spirit of the Lord came down, the servant of God cried earnestly: "Father, if the imperfection of these people or myself is a stumbling block,

kindly forgive us and touch our friend!" That was all! The Lord's power surged into the pastor and he jumped up from his sickbed; he began to walk up and down the room. He cried out: "The Lord has healed me; I am healed", to the ecstatic delight of the people around. He asked for food for the first time and ate it to his satisfaction, after a lapse of many days. He himself came out up to the car to give a send off to the servants of God. He is still alive!

My beloved ones! The Holy Spirit Himself will take control of our tongues, in critical situations, interceding for us in any language of His choice. To understand that language, at all times, may not be possible.

5. The language of the Lord!

According to Isaiah 28:11,13, 'our Lord will speak to His people with stammering lips and another tongue' - any tongue of His choice. Why? He may even create a totally new language **to** talk to us. When we do not completely understand many human languages, is it proper to expect that we will comprehend the language of God?

The Holy Spirit, in this way, may offer our tongue any one of these five kinds of languages. We can notice that these languages are referred to as 'other tongues' or 'new tongues' in the Bible.

The Manifestations of 'Other Tongues'!

When we speak with other tongues, we praise the Lord with all our heart and 'magnify' Him (Acts 10:46). We are thrilled by 'the wonderful works of God' (Acts 2:11) and thank Him profusely. We pour out, intimately at His feet, our personal secrets of life and private griefs of our heart which cannot be disclosed to others (I Cor. 14:2; Ps. 62:8).

"...but the righteous sings and rejoices" (Prov.29:6)

Accordingly, St. Paul delineates this ecstatic experience of praising God, singing in diverse tongues, when filled with the Holy Spirit:

"...I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding"

(I Cor. 14:15)

The saintly man, John G. Lake, sent spiritual tremors over the whole of South Africa, through the healing power of the Lord and His miracles. He spontaneously sang a number of songs in 'other tongues'; he has even translated those songs into English. Even today they are cherished, for they are pregnant with deep spiritual truths.

The Lord blesses us too, with similar experiences of singing in 'other tongues', when we are filled with the Holy Spirit immeasurably even now. As Romans 8:26 teaches us, the Holy Spirit, through our tongues, may intercede for us and for those for whom we show deep care and concern. Isaiah 28:11,12 confirm that when we speak with 'other tongues', the Lord Himself chooses to talk to us through them.

One of these intimations may occur when we exult in 'other tongues' filled with the Holy Spirit.

"...let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret" (I Cor. 14:13)

This is the command given by God to His children, speaking in 'other tongues'. This verse also indicates that if we appeal to God for the gift of interpretation of tongues, He will definitely bless us with that power.

This gift of interpretation of tongues will enable us to comprehend not only what we ourselves speak in 'other tongues' and which of the five types of intimations we are articulating, but also the tongues spoken by the Spirit-filled people around us, and what the Holy Spirit is manifesting through their tongues!

We shall consider more details about the gift of

interpretation of tongues in the next chapter. However, the most important thing we should learn is that, if we receive this matchless experience of 'new tongues', it will become easy for us to establish a closer relationship with God; the Holy Spirit, then, can intimate to our Lord our innermost aspirations and reveal to us our Lord's answers. Through our daily Spirit-filled prayers, we can enjoy listening to the voice of our Lord.

Yes! This gift of speaking different kinds of tongues, alone empowers us to walk with the Lord just as the saints of yore did! That is why, St. Paul who said, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal.6:17), also confessed: "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all" (I Cor. 14:18). A stanza from a familiar song comes to my mind.

"Oh, the pure delight of a single hour That before Thy throne I spend

When I kneel in prayer And with Thee, my God I commune as friend with friend."

May the Lord grant us the same exhilaration as experienced by the singer!

1. The divine nature the Lord imparts!

Proverb 22:24,25 say,
"Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul"

There is an adage in English:

"Tell me who your friends are! I will tell you who you are!"

Yes! Our character and the way we walk, talk, dress and behave are, unknowingly, an imitation of those of our friends with whom we mingle and spend most of our time. Similarly when we speak with our Lord in different tongues, filled with the Holy Spirit and listen to His sweet voice and thus walk with Him, His divine nature is gradually instilled into us without our being aware of it.

The resurrected Jesus appeared as a passer-by to the two disciples who were walking along from Jerusalem to the village Emmaus; He expounded many mysteries from the Scriptures. Later these disciples wondered:

"...Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

(Luke 24:32)

Nearly 25 years ago, there was a Chief Minister, a profound scholar, affectionately called 'Peraringar Anna' ("Our Brother, the wise") in Tamil Nadu, a State in South India. There was none who was not enthralled by his oratory. At times he would speak continuously for three hours; rhyme and rhythm were the hallmarks of his lectures; he would answer all the questions of the people. His speeches were loaded with deep thought - provoking ideas, a gentle sense of humour and enthralling style and diction, so much so, that even long orations would appear to the audience as if they had lasted for only 30 minutes. He was such a great orator in Tamil as to draw this comment from a magazine: "A man who talked and talked and talked into the hearts of the people."

Likewise, the 'honeyed' words of the resurrected Jesus would have inflamed the hearts of the disciples; they might have felt His very presence within themselves. This is the case of those who, at times of intense prayer, experience the gift of speaking different kinds of tongues, through the Holy Spirit; they do talk to God and He does talk to them. The Lord, by talking to them ceaselessly captivates their hearts and transforms their nature into His very own.

My dear ones! This is the climax! Reaping the benefit of the gift of speaking different kinds of tongues! Only through this gift does the nature of God enter into us. Who can afford to lose this great blessing? Who will shun the divine nature of God and say, "I don't want it?" So let us be filled with the Holy Spirit; let us also receive the exalted experience of speaking 'new tongues'; let us live crowned with the divine nature of God!

2. The power of speaking unknown languages of this world!

Many saints have discovered through their practical experience, that in certain crucial situations in God's ministry, they can, through this gift, preach and pray in languages not known to them and receive miracles.

Recently, Rev. Ernest Edwards, a pastor from Australia came to visit me. I was greatly surprised by an episode he recounted to me. It seems, there is an assembly of Spirit- filled people in Cambodia; being illiterate, they do not know any other language, except their mother tongue. They felt the need of the knowledge of English, to translate messages given in English by the servants of God from various parts of the world, as well as to communicate with them.

All of a sudden, one day, they developed an astonishing kind of faith in them. When they were filled with the Holy Spirit and praising God in other tongues, all of them, with one accord, laid their hands on their leader and wrestled with God in prayer: "O Lord, we thank You for the gift of speaking different kinds of tongues, You have given us; now we beseech You to grant our leader, perforce, the capacity to understand and speak fluently the English language." The grace of the Lord descended on their leader instantly. Today, he, though illiterate, understands English and speaks fluently in it, translating English messages into his own mother tongue. What a marvelous miracle is this!

I happened to read in an American magazine, several years ago, this wonderful incident. The servant of God, Tommy Hick went to Russia to preach the Gospel; he engaged a Russian to assist him in translating his English messages into Russian language. One day when he started preaching to the assembled Russians, he quoted I John 1:7 in English: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." That is all! The Russian flew into a rage; spitting on his face, the Russian said, "I don't believe in these old wives' tales!" Saying so, he rushed down from the dais, leaving Hick high and dry! Hick was baffled.

On the one hand shame, insult and the resultant tears in his eyes! On the other, anxious concern about how to proceed with his message! He just silently stood there, shedding tears. But, at the next moment, the Holy Spirit mightily descended on him; he started, involuntarily, to preach in the Russian language. At the end of the Russian message, he gave an altar call to those who committed themselves to Christ and prayed for them. The meeting ended and the divine grace of his mastery over the Russian language also ended; he could not utter or understand one word in the Russian language, after the meeting.

Yes! The gift of speaking different kinds of tongues operates even today, quite in a supernatural manner in the lives of saintly people.

I know a pastor from Kerala, a State in India, called Matthew. He was doing God's ministry in the city of Madras, in Tamil Nadu. Once he had been to North India, where Hindi is the language of communication. Walking along a road in a certain city, he saw a crowd of people and was instantly filled with the desire to share with them the love of Christ, at any cost. When he stood baffled as to how to proceed, the Holy

Spirit descended on him mightily; without his own knowledge, he started explaining, in faultless Hindi, the love of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.

A huge crowd gathered there; his message penetrated into their hearts and made them shed tears. He prayed for them with deep compassion. The people wanted him to speak for some more time; but after the final prayer, that supernatural power was taken away from him. He was able to talk only in Malayalam or Tamil and not a single word in Hindi. Only a few years ago, this pastor left this earth for Heaven.

Yes! All the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit are invaluable gems; each gift is indispensable; each has its own unique value. So let us beseech the Lord to grant us this gift of speaking different kinds of tongues, which is the basis of all other "Gifts". May our gracious Lord Jesus grant this matchless gift to each and every one of you!

Clarification of a Few Imponderables!

Now, let us consider some of the questions raised about speaking in 'other tongues' in the spiritual circles.

a) Are the 'other tongues' a sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit?

Luke 6:45 says,

"...For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks"

Psalms 45:1 testifies:

"My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer"

Yes! When the Holy Spirit fills us immeasurably, our heart becomes overwhelmed with ecstasy. Consequently, our tongue begins to praise the Lord in diverse kinds of languages. So this is a supernatural experience. A sign of the saints being filled with the Holy Spirit!

Countless are the people who have been anointed with the Holy Spirit through the ministry and prayers of the members of 'Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship International' - an organization spread all over the world.

Once a News Reporter intended to do a full-time research on the gift of speaking different kinds of tongues, as he was curious about it. He could not make out anything at all in the beginning about this supernatural phenomenon. Once he stayed in a hotel where the members of this international organization were also lodged. The friends of the fellowship told him: "Sir, so far you have been only doing research about this experience; today we are going to pray for you so that you, yourself, could be passing through this experience." Without waiting for his reply, all of them laid their hands on him and prayed fervently for the anointment. The Lord too was merciful; He filled him with His Holy Spirit in an overflowing capacity. That was all! He started praising God in different tongues. His research too found a culmination, that day itself.

b) Speaking in 'other tongues' is a sign for non-believers. What does this imply?

This statement occurs in I Corinthians 14:22.

The famous preacher, Dr. John Osteen of the United States of

America explained this verse in one of his sermons thus: "Prior to my coming to know of Jesus, I used to spend my nights in nightclubs, enjoying carnal pleasures. All those who frequent the place are non-believers, sinners wallowing in immoral activities. They 'booze' excessively, revel and dance with a base taste and indulge themselves in unspeakable and abominable luscious deeds. I have never heard any of them speak in other tongues."

Yes! Speaking in 'other tongues' is a unique boon granted by the Lord to people who are filled with the Holy Spirit and who adopt sanctified ways of life. Nevertheless, what is the core idea St. Paul hints at, through this verse?

Several years ago, I was preaching in the vesper service in a church at Guntur, a town in South India. After completing the sermon, I made the congregation kneel down; I laid my hands on each one and earnestly prayed to the Lord, for their specific individual needs, row after row. When I laid my hands on a poor young girl in ragged clothes, the Holy Spirit descended on her and she started talking in "other tongues".

When the prayer was over, a mother brought her daughter to me for special prayers. The daughter presented a pathetic spectacle with sores all over her body. Several years ago, she had contacted smallpox. Unfortunately what had happened was that a doctor, without diagnosing her smallpox correctly, had given her a wrong treatment. Alas! The smallpox turned malignant and it aggravated the disease; boils broke out all over her body and marred her looks; she looked horrible. Even world renowned physicians could not heal her and their view, at the end, was that she had to live with her ugly sores. This was the tragic background of her situation, when she was brought for prayer.

I laid my hands on her and prayed for her; led by the Holy Spirit, I asked the mother, "Where is your husband?" She replied, "Sir, he does not have any belief in God's miracles; he is standing outside the church!" Then I told her, "Send him tomorrow to me with a bottle of oil; I will pray over it; apply that oil over the girl's sores; the Lord will miraculously heal her." So saying, I sent them off.

Accordingly, the next day, the girl's father came to see me. What he had to tell me was this: "Sir, I was standing outside the church because of disbelief and aversion; but I was shaken by the manner in which the illiterate girl in rags started talking in Hebrew, as soon as you laid your hands on her. I happen to know a little Hebrew and so I could make out what she spoke. It still puzzles me as to how she could talk in Hebrew." Seizing this opportunity, I shared with him the immeasurable love of Jesus and the matchless power of the Holy Spirit. The same day, he committed his life to our Lord.

After a lapse of many years, I happened to meet the same family in Hyderabad, a city in South India. What a marvel! The girl's facial appearance had completely changed; she had reached her marriageable age. Her father told me: "Sir, now, all the three of us are doing full-time ministry for God, having

committed the whole of our lives to Him."

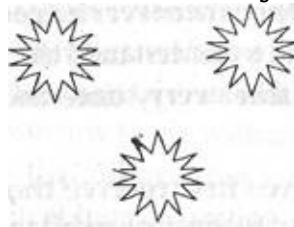
Yes! The 'other tongues' are thus a sign to non-believers; they help to redeem them from sin. None the less, those who are blessed with the gift of 'new tongues' should keep in mind that,

"...the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (I Cor. 14:32)

Now, let us take the case of a child. When it is a mere baby, it expresses an adamant desire, fretting and fuming, to accompany the father, whenever he goes out. But when it grows up, it begins to understand the impossibility of accompanying the father every time and learns to keep quiet.

Similarly, when we first receive the anointment of the Holy Spirit, our feeling of exhilaration is uncontrollable. Yet, with the passage of time, even when we are filled with the Holy Spirit in an overflowing manner on public platforms and while ministering to people who have no knowledge of Christ, the Lord gives us the grace to control our ecstasy and 'other tongues'. He empowers us with 'power', 'the Holy Spirit' and 'much assurance' in a language understood by the audience (I Thess. 1:5).

So, in our home or in our prayer room, let us be anointed with the Holy Spirit abundantly! Let us speak in 'other tongues' and commune with the Lord, according to the "Gifts" granted by Him! Let us be filled with His love and power! Let us even laugh aloud, if that appears to be the proper expression of our ecstasy in the Spirit! We can exhibit this ecstasy openly, amidst believers and in churches where the pastors allow us to do so. But when we are ministering to other common people, let us only behave in such a manner, as will make them realise the "Gifts" and 'Fruit' of the Holy Spirit in action. In that case, the invaluable experience of 'other tongues' will not become a stumbling block to those who are strangers to Christ; instead it will draw them to the Cross of Calvary in multitudes.



2. The Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues!

Biblical reference: I Corinthians 12:10

'Interpretation' means expounding the inner meaning or the essence of a word or phrase or sentence or a vision with all its genuine nuances. Interpretation and translation are two different things. The gift of the interpretation of tongues gives us the ability to bring out not only the meaning, but the underlying ideas and explanations revealed in a variety of heavenly languages emanating from the lips of a Spirit-filled person. What exactly the Lord tells us in 'other tongues' can be put across to the people through 'interpretation'.

Once I was preaching in an important city in India. As I had no knowledge of the local language, my sermon was in English. It was translated by another person into the local language. That night there was a huge audience of about 3,00,000 people. In the course of my message, I said, "Let us stand upon the words and promises of the Lord."

The translator without understanding the implicit meaning of my utterance, translated it thus: "All of you stand up for the word of God." That was all! The whole huge audience were on their feet. I was puzzled and so upset that I could not preach any further. Just to tackle the situation, I found no other alternative except to give an altar call and conclude the meeting with a final prayer. The cause of this confusion was the faulty translation of the interpreter, who did not understand the meaning of my statement.

When India became independent from the British rule in 1947, I was a small lad, living in a village. In that mostly illiterate village, I was the only school going boy. So some uneducated boys living around my house, asked me what the meaning of 'Independence' was! I told them, "'Independence means that we can say what we like and do anything we like; we can walk into any shop and lift anything we want. Nobody can question us." Had they followed my wrong explanation, one can imagine the consequences that would have followed, in that village! This is how an "interpretation in flesh of tongues" can cause great havoc.

Once a Cardiologist friend of mine wanted to examine my heart. He asked a nurse in his hospital to test my heart with a sophisticated equipment. She put a transducer on my chest. A computer television screen nearby showed the exact functioning of my heart. When I did not understand the picture, she explained how my heart functioned as seen on the screen, what the condition of my heart was, how the blood flowed and how my heart was contracting and expanding, etc. Then only I understood a little about it.

Yes! Likewise, the gift of the interpretation of tongues provides us with the ability to understand God's words or statements or visions in unknown languages, in their true sense.

Interpretation of 'Other Tongues'!

Let us suppose that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, there are six possibilities pertaining to the relationship between him and God.

- 1. He may be speaking to the Lord (I Cor. 14:2).**
- 2. He may be communicating to the Lord the secrets of his heart (II Cor. 14:2).**
- 3. He may be edifying himself (I Cor. 14:4).**
- 4. He may be magnifying the Lord (Acts 10:46).**
- 5. The Holy Spirit may be making intercession for him, with compassion and groaning (Rom.8:26).**
- 6. The Almighty God may be speaking to him about some vital issues (Is.28:11).**

Therefore, the gift of the interpretation of tongues explains to us which of the six activities is taking place. In the absence of this gift of the interpretation of tongues, we become confused and prone to making errors because of our inability to understand the alien tongues on our tongue.

Several years ago, a servant of God who had the gift of interpretation of tongues, participated in a convention. Another man of God gave a fine sermon on the second coming of Jesus Christ. During the final prayer session, many people were filled with the Holy Spirit. At that time, one of the stewards in charge of food distribution came there, incidentally; he also began to speak in other tongues very noisily. Another member in the assembly interpreted it as the Lord saying, "Lo, I come again quickly." He also interpreted certain references in the sermon, pointing to the second coming of Christ; there was a loud clapping of hands, as an expression of great joy.

When the meeting was over, the gifted servant of God said, "Sir, I did not feel that the interpretations regarding the second coming of Christ were right. The Holy Spirit was only pointing out certain shortcomings in the life of the steward and was interceding for his edification, on his behalf." All the pastors concurred with him saying, "You are perfectly right; the interpretation given to the people earlier, was wrong."

True! At times, undesirable events do happen when we try to interpret the tongues, prompted by the 'spirit of man' (Prov.20:27) lurking in the depths of our hearts. Sometimes some people convey such faulty interpretations to some honest

believers blessed with high secular positions, telling them, that the Lord is calling them to do full-time ministry. There are a good number of people who, misguided by wrong interpretations, give up their secular jobs and family ties, enter full-time ministry, only to regret later about their abrupt decisions.

We should never forget that 'other tongues' are quite incomprehensible to us. Therefore it is vital that we should have the gift of the interpretation of tongues to understand each revelation.

When this gift operates, it enables us not only to understand the six types of intimations or communications referred to above, but also each revelation that is imparted to us through 'other tongues', from the lips of our Lord.

1. The word of wisdom! (I Cor. 12:8)

When we speak 'other tongues', God may grant us the word of wisdom through them. It is absolutely necessary to understand it, exactly as it is.

For example, consider the case of Moses. As narrated in Numbers 20:8, when there was no water to drink, for the multitudes of Israelites, God told him: "Speak to the rock; it will yield its water." But Moses, without literally following God's command made a slight mistake. Earlier, in a similar kind of situation, the Lord had pointed out a particular rock and asked him to strike it with his rod (Ex. 17:5,6); immediately water had flowed out from it. Alas! Recollecting this incident, this time too, he struck the rock and that too two times (Num.20:11). Indeed water came out abundantly; but God was grieved at His heart and said to Moses and Aaron:

"...Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12)

Deeply regretting this lapse, Moses pleaded earnestly with God to allow him to see the fertile land as promised by Him earlier. But, Moses tells the Israelites, "The Lord was angry with me on your account and would not listen to me. So the Lord said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter'" (Deut. 3:26).

My dear ones! To understand each word of wisdom given to us by the Lord through 'other tongues', we necessarily should have the gift of the interpretation of tongues.

In 1985, during the course of my prayer, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "Your car is very old; exchange it and purchase a strong Benz car." Benz is quite a costly car and so I found a second hand one. All my friends urged me, saying: "In obedience to God's command, purchase the Benz; you can pay the money in easy instalments." But I thought within myself that instead of borrowing a huge amount to purchase a Benz, I could continue using my old car and spend that money for God's ministry. I did not understand that God's word about buying a car was not given as a suggestion but as a command. Though the word came to me through 'other tongues', many times, I took it as a suggestion; I never put it into action. What was the net result?

On 21.5.1986, when I was travelling with my family in my old car, we met with an accident and the car was smashed flat. Alas! My 17-year-old beloved daughter, Angel, lost her life. My heart was shattered to pieces, and I still lament since that day, "Alas! Why did I not obey the Lord's command?" No use crying over spilt milk!

Had I prayed for receiving the correct interpretation, this gift would have made it clear that it was not a mere suggestion of God but a command; I would have obeyed it. And I would not have lost my beloved daughter, whom I loved more than my own life, due to my carelessness.

2. The word of knowledge! (I Cor. 12:8)

We understand from II Samuel 7:1,2 that King David wanted to build a house for the Lord. But the Lord's word was: "It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts" (I Chr. 28:6). The Lord did not stop there; He Himself, through His Holy Spirit, drew the plan for the entire edifice and even for all the articles of service in the house of the Lord, writing it with His own hand, according to I Chronicles 28:11,12,13,19. Moreover He gave Solomon a wise heart or the power of interpretation to understand God's Master Plan perfectly and construct the temple, implicitly following every detail of the revelation God had given to his father, David.

As St. Paul explains in II Corinthians 12:1-4, many times the Lord would take me to Heaven, in spirit, whenever He wanted to explain to me what should be done in this world for His ministry. There He would tell me or show me every detail of what I should do for Him.

On one occasion, the Lord commanded me to construct a Prayer Centre for people from all over the world to come and stay and raise their prayers to Him. Yet, I was baffled about what to do and how to build the Prayer Centre. One day, when I was praying filled with the Holy Spirit, God took me in a vision to Heaven and showed me a magnificent prayer mansion. To me at first, it appeared as just a church in Heaven! But the interpretation given to the vision was this: "This is the blueprint of the edifice you have been commanded by God to build up; observe all the minute details; you must construct a Prayer Centre on earth according to this exact model."

When I came out of this heavenly vision, I called my son Paul and explained to him the vision graphically. According to Deuteronomy 34:9 and Isaiah 11:2, the Lord had filled my son with the spirit of wisdom. As I gradually unfolded the divine vision granted to me, the Spirit within the young man interpreted it to him. Accordingly the Prayer Centre was constructed. When the construction was over, I had a close look at it and the surrounding structures; I was stunned and thanked God exclaiming, "How invaluable the wisdom granted by God to my son is!"

This is the Prayer Centre called 'Bethesda Prayer Centre' in Karunya Nagar near Coimbatore, in South India. Today people from different parts of the world come to this Prayer Centre, pray and receive miracles from His loving hands!

Yes! When we speak in 'other tongues', the word of knowledge is granted to us so that we can understand and interpret God's words accurately.

3. The word of faith! (1 Cor. 12:9)

"...The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach)"

(Rom.10:8)

In 1980, the office of "Jesus Calls" faced a critical situation regarding its location. Till then, we had been conducting our ministry in buildings taken on a rental basis; so we were confronted with a lot of problems; frequently, we had to shift the office from one place to another. So, when I was praying with tears about this problem, the Lord asked me to purchase a building of our own. We surveyed nearly 500 buildings and finally hit upon a building of our liking.

When we prayed for this purpose, the Lord's voice was heard, saying, "Purchase this building." I prayed, lamenting: "Lord, I don't have this huge amount; how can I buy it?" To this the Lord answered: "Son, I will Myself arrange to pay for it; don't worry!" I was overwhelmed with joy when I heard the Lord's assertion. With much difficulty, we raised a loan from a bank and purchased that building. The Lord only knows how much tears of blood we had to shed on this account. Because of this stress and strain, my retinal nerves burst and the oozing blood flooded my eyes. So much distress!

My next question was: "The Lord has assured that He Himself would pay this off; but how will He do it?" One day the Holy Spirit descended on me. He gave me an interpretation of the Lord's words: "The Lord made use only of the Israelites to build His tabernacle. He said to Moses, *"Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering"* (Ex.25:2)

In the same way you should appeal to the people; I will speak in their hearts. As you have to remit to the bank Rs.50,000 every month, advertise in your magazine that you need 500 partners to contribute Rs.100 every month. I will stir up the hearts of the people and will give you such donor-partners; you can easily repay the loan."

This interpretation enraptured my mind. Accordingly, I wrote out an appeal in my magazine expressing my requirements; 537 people came forward to help. Thus the Lord graciously helped me to settle the loan before the stipulated date.

4. The word of healing! (I Cor. 12:9)

"He (The Lord) sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Ps.107:20)

As testified in this verse, sometimes, the Lord may give us His word regarding the healing of other people, through 'other tongues'. Any way, it is quite necessary to receive an interpretation or explanation to rely on it and act according to the word. Otherwise we may fail in our attempt.

Please read for yourself II Kings 5:10,11. When Naaman, the commander of the army of the King of Syria sought Elisha's help, he imagined to himself:

"...He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy"

(II Kin. 5:11)

Yet Elisha, understanding the word of healing from God correctly told him,

"...Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean"

(II Kin. 5:10)

Elisha passed on the Lord's word to Naaman, exactly as He spoke. Elisha did not arrogate to himself the power of healing, laying his hand on Naaman, treating him as a high official. Similarly, even today, in our ministry, when our Lord promises healing to some one, through other tongues', it is better to receive the interpretation from the Holy Spirit Himself as to how we should go about it.

Let me give you three types of examples.

a) Laying hands on the sick!

"...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:18)

So said Jesus about His disciples, before He was taken up.

Once when a man of God, engaged in the Lord's ministry, along with his secular job, attempted to pray for a devil-possessed man, he was affected very severely; from that day, the man of God lost his power of speech.

For months together, he was pathetically shedding tears as he had become dumb. There was the danger of his losing his secular job too. At this juncture, he was brought to me. The Holy Spirit clearly and definitively spoke to me, "Lay your hands on him and just thank the Lord." Accordingly, I merely laid my hands on him and kept on saying, "Thank You Jesus! Thank You Jesus!" The Holy Spirit mightily descended on that brother. His mouth was opened; his tongue was loosened and he too, started praising and thanking God. He was healed completely.

b) Restrain from laying hands!

At the same time, in I Timothy 5:22 we read:

"Do not lay hands on anyone hastily..."

Is it not a clear indication given by this verse that we should receive the interpretation and then decide on whom we should lay hands and on whom we should not?

On one occasion, I met a servant of God who had been used mightily to bring God's healing power to thousands of suffering people all over the world, through his healing ministry. He earnestly invited me to go with him and pray for his ailing wife. When I went along with him, accordingly, I was broken-hearted, on seeing the tragic condition of the lady. Her whole body from head to foot was trembling constantly. The man of God explained the reason for this phenomenon thus:

"Sir, one day we both visited a house on a courtesy call; as we entered, we saw a plumpy woman with her hair, all dishevelled. Her very appearance showed us that she was demon-possessed. Yet, my wife, without waiting for any clear guidance from the Holy Spirit abruptly ran to her, placed both her hands on her and rebuked the evil spirit tormenting that

strange woman. That fat woman got up, caught my wife with both her hands and shook her violently. That was all! Immediately this shivering came upon my wife; though many years have lapsed, she has not been relieved. Alas! It has made my life a hell." So saying, he cried bitterly.

This incident makes it very obvious that in certain critical situations, it becomes absolutely necessary to discern with the gift of the interpretation of tongues as to when we should restrain ourselves from laying our hands on certain people, however great our concern for them may be!

c) Anointing with oil!

According to James 5:14 and Mark 6:13, we are told that when we pray for certain people, we should pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. Sometimes, it may be the will of God to use this method for the sick people. The Bible says that two miracles occur simultaneously when we pray with the anointing of oil.

Firstly, the Lord relieves the person from his sickness. Secondly, if he has committed any sin, he will be forgiven; accordingly, the Lord forgives and forgets. So, for those who, living in sin, come for prayer seeking physical healing, it may be God's will that prayer should be coupled with anointing of oil. To find out the Lord's direction in this case, we need the gift of the interpretation of tongues.

Once I had been to a hill State in India. The Ministers of the State Government were very affectionate to us. One of them requested me to visit his house and pray for his son-in-law, who was on his deathbed. We went there; the doctors had given the patient only a few hours to live. Yes! He was on his deathbed.

Within myself I fervently prayed for our gracious Lord's guidance as to what I should do; I received the word of wisdom through the Holy Spirit: "Anoint him with oil and pray; because of his sinful life and addiction to liquor, this problem in health has arisen; his liver has been burnt out." Accordingly, I anointed him with oil and prayed for him with compassion. Immediately, God raised him up and gave him a new liver; he is alive even today!

My dear ones! Though it is our Lord's command to lay our hands on sick people, what method to be followed and for whom, can be known only through the interpretation, given by the Holy Spirit. So the gift of the interpretation of tongues is absolutely necessary to obey His commands, in the right way,

avoiding pit- falls and obstacles.

5. The gift of the working of miracles! (I Cor. 12:10)

Please read Luke 5:5 and John 4:50. Jesus Christ performed mighty miracles through His 'word'. We can find another excellent example in Joshua 10:12. While engaged in a fierce battle against his enemies, Joshua was shocked to see the sun, suddenly setting down and the moon, rising up. He was puzzled, because the battle could not be won in darkness; and Joshua spoke to the Lord. The Lord had given him a clear and specific promise even before he was sent to this battle. "I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you" (Josh.10:8). Joshua was perplexed! On one side he had God's promise of victory; on the otherside the time of sunset had come. At this time, 'the Spirit of wisdom' within him (Deut.34:9) gave him a specific interpretation saying, "Don't worry! Look at the sun and say, 'Stop!' Look at the moon and say, 'Don't rise up!' So will it happen, since it is God's will to give you victory." He acted according to the interpretation and a mighty miracle was performed; he emerged victorious in the battle.

Once my wife had been to Chenglepet, a town in Tamil Nadu to conduct a Gospel meeting. When she got up to address the audience, all of a sudden, dark clouds gathered over the spot where the meeting was held and it began to rain; the people started to run helter-skelter. At once the Holy Spirit spoke to my wife's mind: "It was I who brought you here; so speak out My word; address the rain and say, 'Stop!'" My wife told the audience, "Please don't disperse, the rain will certainly cease." The rain did stop, in spite of the thickly formed, undispersed clouds above! The meeting went on and brought great blessings to the people.

Yes! Though the Lord sends us to His ministry after giving us many specific promises to perform miracles, we need the gift of the interpretation of tongues. Otherwise we lose our courage, when sudden problems encounter us and we meet with failure.

6. The word of prophecy! (I Cor. 12:10)

Regarding prophecy, II Peter 1:19 remarks as follows:

"We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts"

This 'prophetic word made more sure' is granted to us when we pray, filled with the Spirit. Rev.22: 19 reveals the same truth. Yet, according to II Peter 1:20, it is utterly impossible to give a correct private interpretation to any prophecy. The Holy Spirit only can give us the exact interpretation.

20.7.1967 is an unforgettable day in my life! On that day, the Holy Spirit descended on me mightily. He took me to Heaven in a vision. I was standing there in front of the Lord Jesus. Definitely and clearly, He called me to do His ministry. But I put forth certain conditions regarding my requirements before consenting to do His ministry. He wrote down all my conditions in a beautiful scroll and wrote a statement undertaking to grant them.

In turn, he demanded certain commitments on my part. He wrote down my assurance to do His ministry, if my conditions were fulfilled. He signed at the end of the commitment and made me sign it too. I thought that Jesus had called me for a full-time ministry from that moment. Yet I did not have the courage to do it. However, I started praying earnestly for that. One day the Holy Spirit came down and gave me His interpretation: "My son, you have gone through much poverty and financial stress in your life so far. Only after blessing you with material prosperity and glorifying His name through you, the Lord will separate you for a full-time ministry."

1 Peter 1:10-12 clearly and definitively tell us when both the gift of the interpretation of tongues and the gift of prophecy would be fulfilled, and to whom they would be given.

True! Is not the same fact explained in Ecclesiastes 3:11; 8:6,7? Galatians 4:4 and Romans 5:6 confirm that all the prophetic statements regarding our Lord Jesus Christ were fulfilled at the 'fullness of the time' only.

At this juncture, I wish to point out and explain the details of another spiritual experience. Since 20.7.1967, after the completion of every year, exactly at the same time, Jesus would appear before me. He would take me to Heaven. There He

would present me before the assembly of the saints of the Old Testament and the apostles (Heb. 12:23; Ps. 107:32). He would introduce me to the august assembly. My heart would exceedingly exult to see the 12 apostles and the prophets of the Old Testament such as Abraham, Isaac, David, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha and Moses.

Our gracious Lord would tell them: "I have decided that this year too, it is better that my son, Dhinakaran continues to work in his Bank, while doing My ministry, in addition to it. What do you all say?" What can be said against the considered assertion of Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords? All would say, "Amen!" and some would pronounce, "Hallelujah!" He would bless me with both His hands saying: "My son, you can continue to do your secular job and My ministry simultaneously. I will honour your ministry with My signs and wonders."

With these loving words, He would send me back to this world. This blissful experience would add a new vigour to my ministry; my heart would overflow with an abundant joy, which the world cannot give. For 17 years it gave me a divine capacity to withstand, with a cheerful smile, all the problems and tribulations which I had to face in my work at the Bank.

Likewise, after 17 years, in April '84 the Lord definitively spoke to me and asked me to resign and come out of my secular job. Accordingly, I came out and began my fulltime ministry. Since then the Lord has been helping me to do His ministry with great joy, unhampered by any fear of starvation and poverty.

7. The gift of discerning of spirits! (I Cor. 12:10)

In Acts 8:9-13, we read of a powerful sorcerer, Simon, who was made a believer, by the ministry of Philip; he was baptized too. But when Peter found him trying to purchase' the Holy Spirit with money, he said: "Your heart is not right in the sight of God. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity"

(Acts 8:21,23). At times, particularly when we are praying for others, the Spirit of the Lord may reveal to us, the devil's influence concealed in their lives. And so, in such circumstances, it is absolutely essential for us to be guided by the gift of the interpretation of tongues, as to how we have to proceed.

Many years ago, the pastor of a church, took a gifted servant of God to pray for a lady of his parish. Afflicted with cancer, she was on her deathbed. When he prayed earnestly for her, the Holy Spirit opened his spiritual eyes. He saw a fierce looking devil near that lady. The devil screamed at him, "This woman lives in adultery. So, it is I, who am tormenting her with this disease. Her grave pit is ready and if you intervene I will kill you and bury you also in the same pit."

The servant of God pondered, within himself, over how to proceed and what he understood of the devil's statement. At that time, the Holy Spirit gave him the retaliatory answer, from the very words used by the devil. The devil had stated, "Sin is the cause of the disease." The Holy Spirit asked the servant of God to quote I John 1:7: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." And so, the servant of God addressed the devil and said, "Wicked devil, the blood of Jesus cleanses all the sins of this sister; you cannot touch her any more." On hearing these words, the devil trembled and fled from the place.

Then the servant of God shared God's word with her and made her seek forgiveness from Jesus. He laid his hands on her and prayed for her. The next Sunday, the same lady attended the church and after singing a beautiful song gave witness as to how the Lord had healed her throat cancer and praised the Lord.

Yes! Even in the operation of the gift of discerning of spirits, the gift of the interpretation of tongues is very essential to interpret the divine revelations given to us.

Modus Operandi of This Gift!

The gift of the interpretation of tongues causes the mind of God or His interpretation to appear in our minds (I Cor. 2:11-13). When the Holy Spirit gives an explanation of what we should do through the gift of the interpretation of tongues, that explanation flashes on 'the tablet of our flesh, that is, of the heart.' If you read Proverbs 3:3; 7:3; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16; II Corinthians 3:3, you will find our 'hearts' referred to as "tablets". That is why it is absolutely essential that our hearts should be kept as pure as the hearts of innocent babies. Both Isaiah 28:9 and Luke 10:21 deal with this truth. Even if we nurture a tiny speck of an unwanted impure idea in our heart, it will, ruin the interpretations given by the gift of the interpretation of tongues. We will be misled and take a wrong decision.

Once a woman gave birth to a beautiful male child; when he was eight months old, he charmed every one with his sweet smile. One day, the baby began to cry out in hunger. The mother quickly grabbed a small bowl and mixed some milk powder in it, and gave him to drink. Alas! A few seconds after the baby drank that milk, he died of choking.

The doctor who rushed to the spot asked the people there, whether the vessel was used for any other purpose. The people recollected that rat poison had been kept in the vessel, and it had been left improperly washed; and they told the doctor so. See, one drop of poison had killed the guileless child. Likewise, it is vital that our hearts do not have even an iota of defilement, if this gift of the interpretation of tongues is to operate perfectly and usefully.

Next, as it is mentioned in Jeremiah 6:10, we should necessarily have a heart that does not despise the word of God. Only those who derive pleasure from the reading of the word of God will be filled with God's word. God can grant an exact interpretation only to such hearts. If we don't live and act according to God's word and command, we will surely not understand the interpretation given by our Lord; somewhere, somehow, we will stumble.

Once I was taken round a big factory manufacturing photographic films. I was given a special type of dress and a special pair of shoes before being taken round. I was amused

when I saw my figure in the mirror, in that dress. Naturally, I asked them, "Why this special dress?" They replied: "Sir, according to this company's rule, no one can enter these rooms without putting on this special dress. Even if a minute particle of dust is carried in, it will damage the acid solution worth crores of rupees. We have to implicitly obey the company's rules just to prevent this pollution.

We too should maintain the purity of our hearts. As Isaiah 4:3,4 tell us, we should allow the Holy Spirit which is the "Spirit of burning" to scorch away the specks of sin and blemishes in our hearts. Let us preserve the purity and sanctity of our hearts!

1. The mind of one's self!

"Thus says the Lord God: "Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!"
(Ezek. 13:3)

According to this verse, quite often, there maybe a pretext for giving a fleshly interpretation inspired by the human spirit within us. Whenever the desire to give out some revelation, when the Lord has not given any, swells within us, just to make others think highly of us, it will do great harm to us; we will turn into 'mad prophets' (II Pet. 2:16).

In a certain town, a pastor built up a church with great difficulty, toiling day and night, with tearful prayers. As he wanted further spiritual growth and revival in his church, he requested another preacher, who was supposed to have the gift of prophecy, to conduct revival meetings in his church. He took care of his comfort with great love and concern, allowing him to stay in his own house.

But that preacher, out of malice, spread the scandal about the innocent pastor that he was having an illicit relationship with his sister-in-law, when he visited various members of the church. He also claimed that the Holy Spirit had revealed this hidden sinful life of the pastor to him. A great confusion ensued. The heart-broken pastor and his family had to leave the place with tears in great shame.

Days passed. It was that preacher, who was instrumental in spreading a false rumour and shattering the church, who fell into that sin of adultery and lost his ministry. Was it not

because of a little stain of 'lust' sticking in some corner of the tablet of the preacher's heart that it appeared to his eyes as though the pastor lived in sin? His carnal mind imagined carnality in the innocent pastor's life, Yes!

"...to be carnally minded is death..." (Rom. 8:6)

How true is this 'word'? Let us flee from this carnality!

2. The mind of Christ!

The Bible says:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"
(Phil.2:5)

Paul, the apostle proudly asserts, "We have the mind of Christ" in I Corinthians 2:16. What a life! What a testimony! Please read the two verses, I Peter 4:8 and Proverbs 10:12. The Bible lucidly and firmly says, "Love will cover a multitude of sins." The very quintessence of Christ's mind is 'love and compassion' (I John 4:8,16 ; Ps.86:15, 116:5).

Yes! If our mind is filled with Christ's love, it will enable us to forgive and forget the shortcomings of others and purge our hearts of all ill will and malice; our hearts will then become serene and calm. Through our unstained hearts, we will be able to understand the correct interpretation given by the Lord and pass on those right interpretations to others, too, at all times.

See how this divine gift of the interpretation of tongues is fundamentally necessary to understand the words of interpretation granted to us through 'other tongues'! May God, therefore, grant His grace to everyone to receive this gift!

3. The Gift of Prophecy!

Biblical Reference: I Corinthians 12:10

'Prophecy' is a divine power which foretells the happenings that are to occur in the future, inspired by the Holy Spirit. The minds of all men are anxious and worried about 'what will happen' in the future (Eccl. 6 12; 8:6,7). But the Almighty God quite openly declares that He ALONE has the power to foretell the future events (Is.44:7). Our gracious Lord Jesus too, before his ascension, pronounced to His disciples: "When He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13). True! One important ministry of the Holy Spirit is to foretell His people things yet to come and to protect them through this knowledge of events to come. That is why He graciously and mercifully grants this divine power to His servants also, who are filled with the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:11).

The following three Biblical verses clearly and definitively tell us how prophecy comes into the experience of people:

"For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21)

"A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"

(Amos 3:8)

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets"

(Amos 3:7)

Yes! Prophecy flows from the tongues of sanctified men chosen by God, when inspired by the Holy Spirit. In this manner, the Lord is much desirous of talking to His chosen prophets and people. That is why He is eager to give this gift of prophecy to His people.

Let us consider for a while, how this gift is revealed in the lives of people.

'Other Tongues' and Their Interpretation!

"And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied"

(Acts 19:6)

According to this verse, when St. Paul laid his saintly hands on the believers, the Holy Spirit descended on them. Spurred by the fullness of the Spirit, they spoke with 'other tongues' and gave their interpretations also. In this way, prophecy reached the people.

When a man's tongue utters 'other tongues', the Lord grants to his mind their interpretation also through His Holy Spirit. When that interpretation is sounded in his mind, making him realise that those words constitute God's prophetic message to others, he gives that explanation or interpretation to the concerned people involuntarily, in a language which they can easily understand.

The verse quoted above, explains only this experience. The Lord, who speaks to us with 'stammering lips' and 'other tongues' also speaks through us to other people in the same manner. This is exactly what we call 'prophesying'!

1. Origin of prophecy through 'other tongues'!

When gifted servants of God pray for those who come to them, laying their hands on them, the Lord compassionately grants this matchless gift of prophecy to the people (Rom. 1:11 ; I Tim. 4:14 ; II Tim. 1:6).

The manner in which this gift operates may be explained thus:

"My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue"

(Ps. 39:3)

"Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, nor peak anymore in His name.' But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not"

(Jer.20:9)

When we meditate upon these two verses, we come to know that when the Lord sends into our hearts prophetic messages in unknown tongues, they are like a burning fire in our hearts; as such, we cannot stifle them or keep them back. The message will be smouldering like a mighty burning fire in our soul and hence we cannot suppress its articulation; involuntarily our tongue will declare the prophetic message openly in the language in which the particular recipient or the audience is familiar.

That is why, those of us who are blessed with the experience of the gift of prophecy through other tongues should be wary of one important factor. They should ask themselves: "Am I filled with the Holy Spirit so abundantly that I am unable to control the anointing any longer? Is the God-given prophetic message so irrepressible that it burns like fire in my heart?" When we receive this uncontrollable 'burning fire' of the Holy Spirit along with the prophecy, then we can be convinced that the prophecy comes truly from God Himself. Then we can have the surety and satisfaction that the prophetic words are genuinely true and give it out with all boldness and authority.

At times, when we speak other tongues and receive their interpretation from the Lord, we doubt and debate within our mortal minds: "Can these prophetic words be true? Do they originate from God or from my own fantasies of the mind?" If assailed by this kind of doubt, it is better not to divulge the message but pray to God inwardly, "Lord, if this message comes from You, kindly reiterate it once again and help me." Then God

for whom it is impossible 'to lie' (Heb. 6:18) will echo the words in our mind again and again with a clear cut clarity and with greater power, while anointing us with the power of interpretation. We will burst out in tongues and give out the prophecy to the concerned people in an uncontrollable fluency and joy.

Yearning for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, I was crying out for many years, in the presence of the Lord. I used to rush to all sorts of places where, I was told, there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Today, in all churches and all kinds of spiritual meetings, during the time of prayer, people receive the Holy Spirit, without much difficulty. But 30 years ago, it was not so. In those days, the anointment of the Holy Spirit remained a rare treasure. Only a chosen few received it.

Once, a pastor ministering in a village came to our house, He told me, "Young man! Every Wednesday, a group of people assemble in the open terrace of our house and pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. God is mightily filling them with the Holy Spirit." That was all! Next Wednesday, I ran to the place along with a relative of mine; we prayed from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m in the night diligently; we alone did not receive the anointing. To return home, we had to take a train at 12 midnight.

So, getting up slowly, I told the pastor, "Sir I am taking leave." The pastor was sad that we were returning unanointed. He said, "Well, you can go after I pray." When he prayed, the Holy Spirit descended on him so abundantly that he could not control the outpouring. Then, involuntarily, he began to speak 'new tongues' and interpret them too. That was a prophetic pronouncement for me.

Yes! God indeed spoke to me through him. He explained to me how I have been praying till then and how He, after anointing me, was going to use me in His ministry in future. I could not believe when these prophetic words came to me: "You will go around the whole world and preach My words to millions of people; I will surely anoint you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Yet, I was overjoyed with the assurance that somehow or other the Lord was going to grace me with the Holy Spirit.

In February 1961, when the world renowned servant of God, Dr. T.L. Osborn visited Madurai, a city in South India, I had an opportunity for the first time in my life to witness wonders and miracles, in his crusades. On the last day, he asked, "How many of you are prepared to receive Christ into your hearts, today?" 80,000 hands shot up! Then he turned towards the preachers, sitting on the dais, and said: "Look! India is ready for the harvest. They say, 'Show us the real Christ and His miracles and we will accept Jesus Christ in our hearts.' Why can't you too get filled with this power? Why shouldn't you be transformed into miracle workers?" These words pierced through my heart like a spear.

Right under the scorching sun, I knelt down on the hot sand, crying out, "Lord, grant me too this anointment and power; I will also go over everywhere and do Your ministry, like him." Once again, I dedicated my life to the Lord. I consider this

incident in my life, as the fulfilment of the prophecy granted to me earlier. Yes, the Lord took compassion on me; He inclined His ears to my supplication.

On 10.10.1962, the Lord appeared to me in a vision and filled me with His Holy Spirit. Yes! The prophecy given to me through the village pastor's 'other tongues' and 'interpretation' was fulfilled literally. Even today, my body quivers when I recollect that sacred momentary incident. Because those prophetic words had come out from the pastor's mouth like fire, I had a feeling that the same fire had entered into my heart too, as his words soaked into my ears.

2. Words of prophecy accompanied by visions!

Read II Kings 8:12:

"And Hazael said, 'Why is my Lord weeping?' And he answered, 'Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child'"

In this verse we see that prophet Elisha prophesied, having had a very realistic vision, to the effect that Hazael, the commander of Syria would besiege Israelites and torment them.

Our beloved Saviour Jesus too, with a clear vision of what would happen to Jerusalem later, prophesied:

"For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation" (Luke 19:43,44)

History has recorded the fulfilment of His prophecy verbatim in 70 A.D. true to His picturesque vision.

Please read I Samuel 10:3-11. We see the prophet Samuel foretelling the youth Saul all that would happen to him on his way back home, as Samuel had a dear vision of those events. They came true exactly as he had prophesied. In Acts 21:11, the prophet Agabus saw in a vision through his spiritual eyes, what was going to happen in the life of St. Paul and spoke it out as a prophecy; the fulfilment of that prophecy is recorded in Acts 21:33.

Several years ago, I happened to visit Guntur, in the State of Andhra Pradesh in connection with my Bank work. To me it was

a new city; I did not know the local language either. So I was wondering which church service I would attend on a particular Sunday. On hearing Christian songs being played aloud through a mike, though in a language unknown to me, I went towards the direction from which the music came, along with a young man, a relative of mine, feeling sure that they were Christian songs, by the manner they were tuned.

Somehow we located the church, which had played the songs. Within the church, the service was going on. The pastor was giving the sermon; I could not understand a word of what he was saying. I was standing near the door, wondering whether I should go in or not. The pastor who noticed us, got down from the pulpit, came running towards us, warmly hailing us, "Come in; come in!" He took us into the church and suddenly asked me to go to the pulpit and preach. I was taken aback! At first, I asked my relative to give his testimony. Meanwhile, I prayed within my mind and through the Lord's guidance gave a brief sermon; the pastor translated it into the local language.

When the service was over, I asked the pastor, "Pastor! What made you to so readily accept us and ask me to preach; why are you so warm to us? You have never seen me before." He answered: "I had been fasting and praying earnestly for a revival in my church. One day the Holy Spirit descended upon me mightily; prophetic words were poured out from my mouth. The Lord told me through 'other tongues': 'I will certainly send a revival to your church.' While He was speaking to me, He showed your face in a vision for a moment. God told me, 'This is the man who will come to this town, in search of you; make use of him, I will bring about a revival through him in your church.' So I have been on the look out for you, for months together. So, today, as soon as I saw your face, I realised that it is you whom I saw in the vision that day. That is why I came running out of the church to receive you!" I was thrilled to hear these words. Accordingly, the Lord did wonderful things during my brief stay in the town; He commanded a great revival in that church and that town.

Sometimes, prophecy may come through symbolic visions. For example, consider the visions of Jeremiah. The Lord told him:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; and I ordained you a prophet to the nations"
Jer.1:5)

Later, when He gave him the gift of prophecy, He showed him only symbolic visions, according to Jeremiah 1:11-14. These visions were to be fulfilled in the country, in future. God Himself propounded their interpretations too.

Nearly 20 years back, my wife and I attended a special meeting of a 'Full Gospel Church'. A man of God and his wife, from Australia, gave the Lord's message at the meeting. In the end, he started giving his prophecy regarding many people, assembled there. Suddenly he said: "Here is a lady; I see a vision of her ministry for God; I see her writing on a paper, and always reading books." Quite suddenly again he came down from the dais; approaching my wife, he laid his hand on her head and pronounced this prophecy: "You are going to become an Editor of a magazine in the days to come; you will author many books!"

My wife is a modest and reserved type of person; she used to be very shy about giving a testimony even! So we could not at all believe when he said that my wife, of all people, would become the Editor of a magazine. But today, after 20 years, each word of the prophetic statement is being fulfilled quite literally. On that day, the Lord gave the man of God a symbolic and oblique vision; he understood it quite clearly and definitely and expounded it to my wife.

Yes! When we realise that prophetic words are given to us as we, filled with the Holy Spirit, speak 'other tongues', and understand their interpretation, sometimes, the Lord may shove us events to be fulfilled in the future, through realistic or symbolic vision.

3. Prophecy coupled with the vision of God!

This was the personal experience of the prophet Balaam. Here is an explanation of his experience:

"The utterance of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, with eyes opened wide:

I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near, a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult"
(Num.24:16,17)

Yes! He saw in his vision the Almighty God Himself and also the things that would be fulfilled.

Moses, the man of God, also had a similar experience. God

spoke to Aaron and Miriam,

"...Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream. I speak with him (Moses) face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD..."
(Num.12:6,8)

A small boy living in a slum was greatly enthusiastic about playing the violin. So, he bought an old violin and was playing on it, just as he pleased. One day, an old maestro passing by the slum discovered the boy's taste for music; he made him his pupil and taught him the principles of playing the violin without charging him any fee.

The boy learnt his lessons quickly and his master organised his inaugural public performance, while he was still 16- year-old.

That important day came! The hall was filled with thronging people curious about how a mere 16-year-old boy would give a solo performance. The boy played on the violin his first melody. That's all! People were enraptured; their minds were filled with a limitless ecstasy. In their rapture, some ladies took off their gold jewellery and threw them onto the platform at his feet; some strewed dollar notes on him. He did not even cast a glance at those costly gifts; his eyes were rivetted to the balcony at the rear of the hall.

What were his eyes intently gazing at? The maestro who taught him music was sitting there. Each melody he played drew tears of joy from the master's eyes. He was nodding his head signaling that his pupil was playing with exactitude. The young boy was constantly looking at his master and not at the gifts at his feet. That was why he was able to play so excellently and with single minded devotion.

Likewise, Moses and Balaam intently looked at the Lord face to face and prophesied the very words that rolled out from His mouth. That is why His words were accurately fulfilled without any flaw whatsoever.

On 10th October 1962, I saw the Son of God, Jesus, face to face for three hours. At the end of the vision, I saw the doors of my heart open; He entered in. From that day onwards, till today, whenever the gift of prophecy descends on me, I see His divine face too, in front of me. My tongue utters as prophecy, only the words spelt out by the movement of His lips. This is an experience, I cannot explain myself.

Once I visited a foreign country. All the patriotic people in that country were worried about their country and its future. The reason was that their Government of that day was

extending its full support to disgusting, sinful ways of life. Many were prophesying that the doomsday for the country was very near. One day when I was addressing a public Gospel meeting there, the Holy Spirit descended on me and I declared openly thus:

"The merciful eyes of the Lord are a shield protecting this country. The reason is that the founding fathers of this country, came from another country, with the sole aim that Jesus Christ, the invisible God should be worshipped with perfect freedom; they came and established this country. So, all these sins and blemishes, which you see are like dust, have temporarily gathered over this country. The Lord will definitely cleanse this dust by raising certain servants of His own. The country will be purified again. With the blessings of God, it will flourish as a super power."

All those who heard this applauded enthusiastically, filled with great delight and expectation. True to this prophecy in the ensuing by-election, leaders who loved purity in life won, and are now purifying that country.

What a glorious privilege it is, to behold Jesus face to face and articulate as prophecy, His own words coming out of His own mouth! Yes! How true the word, "Prophecy never came by the will of man," is! (II Pet. 1:21).

Recipients of the Word of Prophecy!

1. The individual!

According to I Kings 13:2, a prophecy was given regarding the birth of King Josiah and his ministry

The prophecy was exactly fulfilled as reported in II Kings 23:15-17. Similarly, the Lord will foretell the events in the personal lives of those, who are endowed with the gift of prophecy, through their own gifts. I Corinthians 12:7 also tells us that all the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit operate in the personal lives of those engaged in the Lord's ministry, endowed with those "Gifts", revealing future events in their lives and bringing them profit and blessing.

I surrendered my heart to the Lord while I was 20. In those days, I used to go about, to all places, preaching the word of God even in street comers, with the sole objective that all should receive the very peace of God which the Lord had granted me. I used to distribute a lot of Gospel tracts and visit hospitals and villages. Excepting the time of my secular work, I spent all the spare time for the Lord's ministry. I derived great satisfaction and pride about my ministry. Four years rolled by.

One day, I attended a meeting in a town called Villupuram in South India. There was a lady called Dhanam Swaminathan. She prayed for me and prophesied through irrepressible 'other tongues'. She recounted to me all details of the ministry I was doing. Then, she gave me the Lord's words about my future thus: "My son, I have not chosen you for this kind of ministry; I have chosen you to be My instrument to draw millions of people all over the world to the cross."

Pronouncing this, when she described various events yet to happen in my life, I was stunned. It was too wonderful to be believed! Yet, when I was anointed with the Holy Spirit, three years later, all her prophecies began to be fulfilled one by one in my life. 36 years later, today, when I recall that day, I realise that not even one blessed word of God uttered through that lady has gone wrong. I very much become aware that all have been fulfilled.

Don't the Biblical verses, Joshua 21:45; 23:14; II Kings 10:10 confirm the same truth?

2. The family!

In Genesis 49:8-10, we read about a wonderful prophecy

regarding the tribe of Judah. This prophecy given through the godly man, Jacob was fulfilled by the birth of our beloved Saviour Jesus Christ, exactly as it was given. Again, was not the prophecy according to Hebrews 7:14 that Jesus, the Son of God would be born in that tribe fulfilled so literally?

When God called Abraham, who had not known Him perfectly, He gave him this prophecy:

"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2)

Even today, when we visit Abraham's tomb in Hebron, a small town in Israel, the spectacle moves our heart. To see the tomb, people from all over the world throng in great-numbers. Jews, Muslims and Christians, with no discrimination among them, claiming that Abraham is their patriarch, shed tears there. Many women, banging their heads on the tomb, cry out, "Our father, please help us!" Yes! God can prophesy about families too.

If the Lord gives a prophecy regarding your family, with words of blessing, believe it; His words will be fulfilled literally. As written in Isaiah 59:21 and 44:3, God will bless your family. People will realise that you 'are the posterity whom the Lord has blessed' (Is.61:9).

3. The nation!

God called the prophet Jonah to prophesy against the great city, Nineveh. Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jon. 3:4).

I had been to Iraq in 1989. At that time, I had the privilege of visiting the city called "Mosul". From the beautiful mosque containing the tomb of Jonah, I could view the city of Nineveh in ruins. True! As depicted in the Bible, Nineveh had been really a very great city. Only on that day I could realise in my spirit, how absolutely true was the prophecy which came through Jonah.

Consider John, languishing as a captive in the island of Patmos. He was told:

"...You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings" (Rev.10:11)

Can't we realise, through this word, that it is God's will to give prophecies for nations too!

Five years ago, in the course of a church service, in Kuwait, the Holy Spirit descended on a young man. At that time, He compared Iraq to an eagle and prophesied: "That big eagle will seize this country (Kuwait) by force; however, the eagle will fly back after some time." No one could believe that at that point of time. But when it really happened, all understood that it was a true prophecy!

4. The world!

From Acts 11:28, we understand that Agabus, the prophet signified by the Holy Spirit said, "There was going to be great famine throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." We see with our own eyes, how prophetic words, coming from various God's prophets about the modern world and all the events of today, are exactly fulfilled.

In 1979, a servant of God endowed with gifts, returned home after attending the New Year service in Madras, with his family. As usual, he knelt down with his family members and relatives and prayed, pleading with God that the New Year should be a year of blessing for them. The Holy Spirit came down and blessed them. He spoke to them about another matter too: "Quite soon Russia will be fragmented; its governance will turn upside down." On hearing this, all, including the servant of God, were shocked. So they recorded the prophecy carefully. Now, we have seen for ourselves how those prophetic words have been fulfilled quite literally.

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets"
(Amos 3:7)

How true is this verse!

5. The Church!

The prophetic words contained in Micah 4:1-4 and Isaiah 2:1-4 lucidly and definitively prophesy what will come to pass in the later days to the church, the 'house of God'. The Lord is ever mindful of His church.

In 1980, I started "Jesus Calls" Institute of Power Ministry according to the dictum of God. Every year, a batch of trainees is selected. After teaching them about the "Gifts" and 'Fruit' of the Holy Spirit, I pray wholeheartedly, laying my hands on them individually, that the "Gifts" and 'Fruit' of the Holy Spirit should abound in their lives. I feel extremely happy when I see personally or get reports that, after the evangelistic training, the prophecy of the Lord given through me is being fulfilled

quite accurately in their lives and ministries.

A short time ago, I had been to the city of Pune, in the northern part of India. There, some pastors of various churches came to meet me. One of them told me, "Sir, I was trained in the "Jesus Calls" Institute of Power Ministry in such and such a year. When you prayed for me on the last day of the course, the Lord prophesied through you: "Your ministry is not that of an evangelist but that of a shepherd; you will build up My church." Accordingly a small church which I started in a town near this city has grown into a big one; the Lord has fulfilled, exactly as promised, His prophecy given to me through you." While narrating this, he was in a mood of ecstasy. I shed tears of joy.

In November 1994, I had been to the city of Manila, in Philipines for an International Conference. In one session I was inspired by the Holy Spirit, to pass on a message given to me by the Lord: "Till the end of 1995, iniquity will go on multiplying all over the world. But at that point of time, the Lord will intervene; He will pour down showers of His Spirit everywhere."

Recently, when Rev. Ernest Edwards a widely travelled pastor from Australia told me, "Even at the present time, the showers of blessing of the Holy Spirit are being poured down on every country." I was amazed. In many countries locked up doors have been battered open. I am receiving similar reports from Rev. Royce and Mr. Annette Allen of New Zealand about many countries, especially China. Reports from Hong Kong confirm this.

Yes! My dear ones! The gift of prophecy is a gift 'nonpareil', unfolding the future of the entire world.

The Signs of a Genuine Prophecy!

Quite often we notice among the people, a confusion as to how to distinguish between a true prophecy and a false prophecy. It is better we meditate upon certain distinguishing signs of a true prophecy.

1. Testimony!

Rev. 19:10 says thus:

"...the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"

Whichever prophetic words tend to glorify Jesus Christ are perfectly true and proceed from the Almighty God.

When I went to a particular city, I found shattered hearts and broken homes, the result of acting according to the words of prophecy, from an illiterate woman. Some of the prophecies she uttered were the following:

I will transform you into the greatest prophet on this earth. There will be no servants of God like you in this world. You are the only true apostle."

Such prophecies isolated them from the union of the children of God and saints and they developed within themselves an arrogant spiritual pride. One particular family relying on the false prophecy of this woman sold out all their belongings, migrated to the land of the birth of Jesus, taking this woman along with them. Only when they reached that country did they realise that no prophecy given by this woman was getting fulfilled. But by then, they had lost all their possessions.

Genuine prophetic words will only glorify our Lord Jesus, who willingly but pathetically underwent ignominy and gave His life for us.

2. Edification, exhortation and comfort!

A clear identification mark of a genuine prophecy is pointed out in I Corinthians 14:3:

"But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men"

According to Genesis 17:1, one of the names given to God is 'El Shaddai'. It means, "God, the Almighty with unlimited power and with the breast of a feeding mother" (a bosom filled with love). So when He speaks to us through 'prophecy', He, like a loving mother admonishes, exhorts, comforts and edifies

us.

Several years ago, I was doing our Lord's ministry, along with my secular work in a Bank, in a particular city. One day, a friend of mine brought his close friend to me for prayer. That gentleman was the owner of a big business; but his partner had deceptively made him sign on a blank paper. Over the signature he wrote out, on his own, that the whole business belonged solely to himself from that day.

Days passed! He threw away the real owner of the shop; this gentleman, overnight, lost his all and was 'on the street', penniless. He had to therefore file a suit in the court to reclaim that the business was his own. The next day, was to be the day, the court would be delivering the judgment in the case. And so he had come to me for prayer burdened with great anxiety and worry.

I prayed, crying out to the Lord for him; and the Lord said that He had nothing to do with that gentleman as he had treated His true servants shamefully, with great pride and arrogance. However I went on pleading for him. Then the Holy Spirit showed me one particular incident in his life when, out of great compassion, he risked his life to save the honour of a young woman, surrounded by wicked men. I reminded the Lord this one good act on his part and begged for mercy. The Lord relented and assured me that He would help that gentleman to recover all he had lost.

When I shared about the Lord's admonition, he was edified. He was exhorted not to treat God's servants cheaply. The promise of the Lord to help him comforted him.

Yes! Words of true prophecy will so work within us as to bring these three benefits-edification, exhortation and comfort. Such prophetic words will be quite exactly fulfilled. The next day the Judge delivered a favourable judgment and restored everything back to him. Of course the erring partner was punished! Our dear Saviour Jesus said:

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matt.24:35)

Moses asserted, regarding the prophetic words of God:

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19)

I he prophet Samuel also has confirmed this by saying:

"...the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent" (I Sam. 15:29) Yes! Prophetic words will certainly be fulfilled 'in its time' (Eccl. 3:11).

Now, let us deal with certain questions of ambiguity regarding the gift of prophecy.

Non-Performance of Prophecy!

Certain incidents have been recorded in the Bible, when prophecies were not consummated; and there are sufficient grounds for it.

1. God's compassion!

When the wickedness of the people of Nineveh had 'come up before' God, the prophet Jonah was sent by Him, 'to cry out against it' (Jon. 1:2). Yet when they heard his note of warning, they 'believed God' (Jon. 3:5), trembled before Him, and repented for their sins with remorse.

"Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" (Jon. 3:10)

Yes! It is no wonder that God's mercy and compassion prompted Him to alter His harsh verdict pronounced by Him earlier. Does not the following Biblical verse confirm the same fact?

"Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord" (Jer. 31:20)

Once, a pastor had sent an urgent message to me through a young man of his church. The young man told me, "Sir, the pastor's wife is seriously ill and is at the point of death; he has sent me to request you to pray for her." Asking him to sit outside for a while, I went to my room and wept bitterly on her behalf. God's answer came to me; I was very much perturbed on listening to it. Again and again I pleaded with God, several times; every time God gave me the same answer.

Finally, I came out, trembling, and told the young man, "Young brother, though I repeatedly pleaded for your pastor's wife, God says that she will die; inform them about it." The young man, dazed, hurried back to the pastor with this unpalatable word from God. He reported to the pastor exactly what I had told him. His wife was an unrepentant woman; she was a thorn to him and a great hindrance to his ministry. The pastor had been shedding tears at the Lord's presence for years for her transformation; I was not aware of it; but God had

known everything. Purposely He had sent those harsh words concerning her.

When she overheard these words told to her husband, she was shocked and crestfallen. Kneeling down on her bed itself, she confessed all her shortcomings and sins with true repentance. She wailed and cried, "Lord Almighty, forgive me; O God, forgive me!" God showed mercy on her and gave back her life. God healed her completely and made her a 'crown' in the life of her husband. Yes! "Mercy triumphs over judgement " (James 2:13).

So, it's no wonder, according to this verse, that the Lord .liters His own prophetic judgement, uttered through prophetic words.

2. Sin!

"According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection" (Num. 14:34)

The Tamil Bible puts the words "My rejection" as "the change that has come over My covenant with you."

The Lord effected a change in His covenant with the people of Israel because of their sin. Alas! None of them could reach the promised land, Canaan except of course Joshua and Caleb.

Are we too not warned of this aspect by Deuteronomy 29:19? *"And so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I walk in the imagination of my heart' - as though the drunkard could be included with the sober"*

3. Presumptuous prophecy!

"When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:22)

"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!'" (Ezek. 13:3)

What we understand from the two verses quoted above is that there is no doubt whatsoever that the 'presumptuous'

prophetic words given by foolish people, who follow their own spirit, will never come true.

The Supremacy of the Gift of Prophecy!

"Then Moses said to him, 'Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD'S people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!'" (Num. 11:29)

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:1)

We find, from these two verses, that Moses, the prophet, and St. Paul desired that all the children of God should receive the gift of prophecy. What is the excellence of this gift?

1. Activates other gifts!

Wherever the gift of prophecy operates, it activates other gifts also.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (I Cor. 13:2)

For example, let us consider the reply God gave to King Hezekiah's prayer through prophecy:

I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

And I will add to your days fifteen years..."

(II Kin. 20:5,6)

The first two statements, 'I have heard your prayer' and 'I have seen your tears' are an expression of the gift of the word of knowledge.

The next utterance, "Surely I will heal you; on the third day, you shall go up to the house of the Lord" reveals that through the gift of the working of miracles, the interwoven gifts of healings will be induced not gradually, but instantaneously. The statement, "I will add to your days fifteen years" is a reflection of the word of prophecy about the future.

Thus as the gift of prophecy interacts with and activates several "Gifts", it truly is the most important gift.

2. Makes prophets!

Those who receive this gift, in course of time turn into prophets. This gift which operates in the life of a servant of God, only when necessary, in the beginning, begins to abide in his life permanently, as time goes on, and transforms him into a

prophet.

Acts 21:9 says that Philip, the evangelist had four virgin daughters who prophesied. They surely had the gift of prophecy, but were not called prophets, anyway. It was different with Jeremiah. According to Jeremiah 1:5, he was ordained as a prophet in his mother's womb itself. There are people, like Jeremiah, who were ordained as prophets even while they were in their mothers' wombs. At the same time, like St. Paul, though separated by God for His ministry, some people turn into prophets, only gradually, step by step (Gal.1:15,16). As we read in Acts 9:20, as soon as St. Paul met Christ and his life was completely transformed, without any delay, he started preaching: "Jesus is the Christ". Yes! Immediately he changed into an evangelist. Many years later, the Lord saw that he was faithful to Him and, as testified by Acts 13:1, He changed him into a prophet and then promoted him as an apostle. Likewise those who lead a holy life allowing the gift of prophecy to operate in their lives shall gradually be transformed into prophets. That gift will thereby be made to operate in their lives all the time. Therefore we can safely assume that the gift of prophecy plays a key role in lifting the servants of God to pinnacles of glory in their ministries. The gift of prophecy elevates a servant of God to the calling of a 'prophet'.

Ministry of a Prophet!

1. Personal contact with God!

The Biblical verses Exodus 33:11; Numbers 7:89; 12:8 illustrate how the Lord God spoke to Moses, face to face.

Our dear Saviour Jesus was called as a Prophet, mighty in word and deed. Has not Jesus Himself revealed to us, in John 5:19, that God, the Father spoke to Him daily, showing Him what things He should do?

In 1986, as commanded by the Lord Jesus, I toiled hard to establish an Engineering College in a remote corner, unknown to any one, near Coimbatore in South India. A strong opposition came from all directions in the Christian world. Many criticized, in several ways, questioning why a man, doing the Lord's ministry, should found an engineering college. Nevertheless I obeyed God and established that college, shedding tears of blood and losing my own health.

Today, after it has earned an outstanding name and name, parents and students flock from all directions eagerly and vie with one another for admission there, declaring that, this is the college of their choice. What astonishes them is not the college campus only, but the surrounding environment, beautiful natural sceneries, mountains all around, abundance of sweet water, cool salubrious climate even in the hottest of days in other towns, and a blessed locale.

When people question me how I chose this locale, the only answer I give is, "I am also a stranger to this place; but the Lord Jesus appeared before me and showed me this spot. This is quite a new place for me also, as I live 280 miles away. Jesus Himself, in a vision, pointed to me this place and expounded to me in detail what I should do here; I have merely done what He has asked me to do." This is the reply I give with all humility.

Yes! The Lord speaks to His prophets face to face, even today.

2. God heeds his prayers!

"Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them" (Ps. 106:23)

This verse demonstrates how the Lord paid heed to the prayer of Moses, who interceded for the people of Israel.

Look at our gracious Lord Jesus Christ! During His sojourn

on this earth, did He not pray, pleading with God for people with feeble, failing, faith (Luke 23:34; 22:31,32).

Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25, inform us that even now, He is interceding for us sitting at the right hand of God.

Several years ago, I was conducting Good News Meetings in the city of Nagpur. One day, I was a little late for the meeting. Before my message a loving sister named Mary Franswa, who had come from another city gave her witness. She said that she had suffered heart attack eight times and the doctors had given her no hope of recovery. She explained, how, in spite of her desperate situation, she was miraculously healed in a Good News Meeting conducted earlier in her native city Secunderabad.

A great scholar, by name, Dr.R.Beliram, who did not utterly have faith in Christ, also had come to the meeting. He also had an irremediable problem in his heart for 34 years. He could not even turn himself from one side to the other in his bed. He was leading a miserable life. When he heard that sister's witness, involuntarily, he mumbled, "How nice it is !" Next moment, he saw a hand descending from the sky towards him, and two fingers of the hand breaking open his heart and entering in and turning it upside down. At that exact moment, he felt blood rushing with new force in his heart. He was thrilled. Blood flow became quite normal and all the sufferings of the past 34 years vanished. Having realised the power of Jesus working in his own body, he resigned his high office and today he is doing the Lord's ministry, with his family.

3. The compassion of Christ!

The servants of God will also be filled with compassion. Like Moses (Ex.32:32), and St. Paul (II Cor.5:14; Rom.9:3), they will feel that the sufferings of others are their own and they will intercede with the Lord for them, filled with compassion.

In the same way Jesus Christ, the Son of God was a great prophet, mighty in word and deed. He was performing countless miracles for countless people. John 20:30 and 21:25 declare clearly that these miracles are too numerous to be recorded in books 'that even the world itself could not contain'.

I know a servant of God in Madras city, a prophet endowed with the gift of prophecy. He honours leaders of all churches, irrespective of their religious creed. His attitude towards them is always one of humility; so they also like him very much. On one occasion, returning from his tour, he heard that a Catholic

priest who really loved him and encouraged him in his ministry was at the point of death and rushed to the hospital. There the priest was lying unconscious; his kith and kin were also in that room. The medical assistants said, "He cannot survive." But the servant of God did not want to lose him on the face of the earth at that time. He gripped the hands of the unconscious priest and cried bitterly to God: "Lord, please send him back (to me)."

After interceding with this one sentence prayer, the servant of God went away. What happened? After a few seconds, the priest opened his eyes and queried whether that particular servant of God had come there. All, in a chorus said, "Yes!" Then he narrated: "I was standing in the presence of our Lord Jesus in Heaven. When I was completely immersed in the sweetness of the Lord's presence, suddenly the voice of this particular servant of God reached Heaven. Addressing the Lord, the voice sounded with compassion, 'Lord, please send him back (to me)!' Jesus, our Lord told me, 'My son is calling you; you go back' and I opened my eyes."

This is exactly the ministry of a prophet!

4. Suffers for others!

The Bible portrays the suffering that would follow a prophet thus:

"My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience"

(James 5:10)

Consider the case of Elijah. At the peak of suffering caused on account of the queen of that country, he lamented, "Now, Lord, take my life" (I Kin. 19:4). And the prophet Moses too lamented in the same way at the height of distress: "Please kill me here and now!" (Num. 11:15). Look, again, at the matchless prophet, our merciful Lord Jesus! We read in Hebrews 2:10 that He too was made 'perfect through sufferings.'

Does not Hebrews 5:7 report that Jesus Christ lamented with 'vehement cries and tears' to God, the Father offering prayers and supplications to save Him from death? Don't we read that when He travailed in prayer at Gethsemane at the height of agony, 'His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground?' (Luke 22:44)

I know a servant of God, who has been mightily used as a prophet by God for the past 33 years. He has abundantly received the anointing of the Holy Spirit and has gifts and

divine visions. Countless are the people all over the world, who have received miracles through his prayers with tears. But during these 33 years, it may be said that there is no disease which has not afflicted him. Four times he had a close brush with death.

The sufferings caused by cruel and wicked people have shattered his heart. It has been pierced as though by a spear, by insulting libels of his own deceitful friends and fellow-workers. A tragic situation arose, making him shed tears of blood, when he lost his daughter, precious to the whole family. Words are inadequate to describe the torment and the humiliation he had to undergo, to execute each plan given by God to his ministry, and to collect the necessary resources from the people, humbling himself before them.

Nonetheless, in the midst of all this agony, the Lord is still using him mightily. People who listen to his words through the radio and television programmes and public prayer meetings, receive a wholesome peace of mind; they receive miraculous healing through his prayers. They acquire their life requirements in a marvelous manner; demons tremble and flee at his sight.

Once when a Sister prayed for him, with compassionate concern, Jesus, the Son of God, proclaimed about this servant of God, endowed with the gift of prophecy:

"HE IS A PIECE OF MY BROKEN BODY."

My dear ones, prophets undergo suffering, experience grief and are afflicted with tribulation. Yet because of their enduring patience, they are protected from destruction in their path of tears. They will be a source of blessing to the suffering people, till the last breath of their life and until they hand their lives back to God in Heaven.

Today, the world craves longingly for such prophets. Each day I receive about 2,000 letters, from all parts of the world. Several people enquire, "What is the next step for me, standing at the crossroads of life?" I lament and pray for such people to find out from God, what they should do next; when I convey the God-given solution, what a great satisfaction comes into their lives! What a great joy! Today's crying need of the world is "prophets".

Therefore, everyone of us should desire for and receive this

unparalleled gift of prophecy. May the Lord help us to be transformed into prophets through this unparalleled gift!

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4. The Gift of the Word of Wisdom!

Biblical Reference: I Corinthians 12:8

The verse, quoted below, presents the exposition of the gift the word of wisdom.

"...A word in season (spoken) to him who is weary..."

(Is. 50:4)

The following verses from the Bible clarify the definition of this gift a little more lucidly:

"Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad" (Prov. 12:25)

"A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!"

(Prov. 15:23)

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Prov. 25:11)

Why do the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge have the qualifying term "word" attached to them? - is a question to be answered. The answer is provided by the Biblical verses mentioned above; the Lord imparts 'wisdom' and 'knowledge', which He wants to bless us with, through His word.

"He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly" (Ps. 147:15)

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Is. 55:11)

These verses also testify the fact that God imparts His wisdom to us through HIS WORD. Hence this gift is termed as the gift of the word of wisdom. Another reason can also be adduced to this phenomenon. John 1:1 calls Jesus Christ Himself as 'the Word of God', 1 Corinthians 1:30 avers that Jesus, 'the Word of God' became for us 'wisdom from God'. Yet again,

Colossians 2:3 proclaims that 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' are hidden in our Lord Jesus, That is why, when the Lord speaks of wisdom or knowledge, to indicate that they emanate from His son Jesus, who is the 'Word', He might have added the qualifying additive to these two gifts.

The Original Source of Wisdom!

The Almighty God!

The Biblical verses, Romans 11:33 ; 16:27 and Proverbs 2:6 inform us quite clearly that wisdom originates only from God alone. When this invisible God manifested Himself in flesh on the earth as "Jesus", all the treasures of wisdom were hidden within Him. We find this fact explained in Colossians 2:3; Isaiah 11:2 ; I Corinthians 1:24.

"Who is like a wise man?... A man's wisdom makes his face shine..." (Eccl. 8:1)

True to this statement we read in the Bible that the face of Jesus, the Son of God shone 'like the sun' (II Cor. 4:6 ; Matt. 17:2). The Holy Spirit distributes this divine wisdom to people who seek it (I Cor. 12:11). We can discover from the Bible that the wisdom that

God gives, is distributed to each individual according to his call or ministry:

"...But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that" (I Cor. 7:7)

As pointed out in this verse, this gift operates in the lives of the people, according to the requirement of their ministry or call.

Let us consider a few examples from the Holy Bible!

1. Bezaleel!

Exodus 31:1-6 narrate how when God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle for Him, He Himself chose a man called Bezaleel and 'filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.' God appointed with Bezaleel, Aholiab and other assistants and 'put, wisdom in the hearts of all.'

The Biblical verses, Exodus 25:8,9,40 inform us how the invisible God showed Moses the pattern of the tabernacle, its furnishings and other structures in a graphic and clear manner. When Moses conveyed the whole plan to Bezaleel, he was able to absorb the entire idea, as he had been given by God the wisdom to understand it. When Moses was unfolding the visions he had, God spoke to Bezaleel, changing the words of Moses into His own words and through the gift of the word of wisdom, imprinted those words on the mind of Bezaleel. He, later, granted him His wisdom to complete the entire task.

To put it briefly, He gave to Bezaleel the same wisdom with which He Himself had created all things in Heaven and earth, as we read in Jeremiah 10:12:

"He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at His discretion"

A medical student one day returned home in the evening, with her lunch packet untouched and untasted. Her mother who had lovingly taken great pains to prepare the tasty food, was much infuriated. She poured on her daughter these words of scorn: "I got up very early in the morning with great difficulty to cook the lunch for you; but you have indifferently brought it back, without even touching it; and you are throwing it away in front of me." You know, what the girl told her mother!

She said, "Mummy, today we were given a human hand in

our Anatomy class for dissection and observation. When we were dissecting it, I was struck with great wonder as to how God had created it, with tremendous wisdom. I was so absorbed in the study of the hand, that I did not realise the passage of time and feeling of hunger too."

Yes! My beloved ones! The divine wisdom exhibited in His 'creation' is matchless. He gave that wisdom to Bezaleel and enabled him to construct a tabernacle for Him. Today, the church of the living God on this earth is termed as the 'House of God' (I Tim. 3:15).

"Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established" (Prov. 24:3)

As mentioned above, to build the house of God which is the church of the living God in this world, we should necessarily have divine wisdom. The Lord is

only very eager to grant us wisdom to solve all sorts of problems that afflict our churches. Is it not evident from Acts 15:28 that the Holy Spirit was with the apostles to help them to settle the disputes that surfaced in the 'Early Church' by granting them His wisdom?

A young man and his wife, trained in the "Jesus Calls" Institute of Power Ministry began a small ministry in a suburb in the metropolis, Bombay. On one occasion, when I met them, they complained that there was no progress in their ministry; I prayed earnestly to God about this. The Lord gave me the word of wisdom.

Next day, I called them and said: "Conduct a healing service every month for the sick, when you should anoint them with oil and pray for them. Advertise the healing service on a large scale. People will come thronging to your church through the healing service and your church will expand. This is the guidance from God." After listening to me, the young man raised a question: "We will certainly do what you have instructed us to do; but if the people do not get healed, when I anoint them with oil and pray, it will create only a harmful result. Then what should I do?" I replied, "Young brother, don't worry! The Lord will definitely perform miracles. He has promised us to do so in Mark 16:18 and James 5:14,15. If at all no miracle happens, put the entire blame not on you but on me." I said this jokingly!

After several months, I met a relative of this young man and made enquiries of the ministry of the couple. He said, "Brother, it is not just one church now; they have started a branch church too; all their churches are overflowing with people. God is working mighty miracles through them; once a dead child was resurrected." I was delighted!

Yes! To raise up churches today, it is essential that the gift of the word of wisdom should operate in our lives, as it did in the life of Bezaleel.

2. Joshua!

Joshua was a warrior; the captain of the army of Israel His calling was to lead the people of Israel to Canaan, God's promised land and 'cause them to inherit it' (Deut. 31:7). Before sending him off, on his mission, the Lord filled him with His spirit of wisdom.

"And the LORD said to Moses: 'Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him'"
(Num. 27:18)

This was God's command to Moses. And so did, Moses.

"Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses"
(Deut. 34:9)

When Joshua started leading the Israelites, he had to wage a fierce war with the people of the land. Many other problems too cropped up as a stumbling block. But he still won because of the word of wisdom granted by God, whenever necessary.

Here are the examples of the hurdles he encountered:

a) The river Jordan!

The first barrier between the people of Israel and Canaan was the river Jordan. It was the harvest time, when the Jordan was overflowing its banks. Yet God commanded Joshua: "You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan' (Josh. 3:8). In the same way, when the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water, the waters which came down from upstream stood still and rose in a heap" (Josh. 3:15,16). So it happened according to God's words. There were two benefits which resulted from this miracle. Firstly, the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel (Josh. 3:7; 4:14). Secondly, the hearts of all the kings of the Canaanites melted and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel (Josh. 5:1).

b) The walls of Jericho!

Joshua 6:4, 16, 20 describe to us how the walls of Jericho, that stood as a challenge to the people of Israel collapsed and fell down flat by the might of the arms of the Lord. Through this victory, Joshua's "fame spread throughout all the country" as we come to know from Joshua 6:27. God had granted Joshua the word of wisdom to capture this city without waging any war. We read about the word of wisdom given to him in Joshua 6:4,5:

"And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. Then it shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him"

When Joshua followed this word of wisdom, the walls of Jericho crumbled and tumbled down before him. Without waging war, he captured the city.

c) The word of wisdom that stopped the sun and the moon!

Joshua went to the help of Gibeons, with whom he had made a covenant, when they were invaded by the kings of the land; a fierce battle ensued. During the battle, twilight came; the time

for setting down of the sun and the rising up of the moon was impending;
but still the battle was raging on, inconclusive. The perplexed Joshua spoke to the Lord, who gave him the word of wisdom. Guided by God's word, he uttered the command:

"...Sun, stand still over Gibeon; and Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon" (Josh. 10:12)

Amazingly, the sun stood still; the moon stopped coming up. Yes! Every time Joshua was cornered by problems, each time, God showed him the path to victory through the word of wisdom. He was always victorious!

The Lord's ministry is a battlefield! We have to wrestle against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). Cruel-hearted people resembling 'beasts' (I Cor. 15:32) will wage war against us. We need deliverance 'from unreasonable and wicked men' (II Thess. 3:2). We will have confrontations with afflictions like loss and sickness (Job 30:16,27). As Job lamented, 'changes and war are ever with us' (Job 10:17). In the midst of these turmoils, if we have to continue our ministry untiringly, overcoming all these conflicts, we definitely need the word of wisdom at critical times.

I know about a servant of God, filled with the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit. At one point of his life, many tribulations assailed him, one after another. Finding that his ministry was blessed from all directions, many other servants of God, became envious of him and started preaching against him. Some tried to malign his name through base and scurrilous writings in their magazines. Many heads of the churches also joined hands with them and launched an oblique cold war against him.

At the same time, he was afflicted by a serious incurable disease. Surrounded by such adversities on all sides, he was heart-broken. Desperately he was fretting within himself thinking that it was better to die than to live in this condition. In this harsh and hard situation, one day, suddenly, the Holy Spirit descended on him and his family. Amidst them our Lord Jesus Christ appeared and poured out His words of wisdom.

The essence of his message was this: "My son, you have been faithfully following Me, for the past 30 years. Yet, you have never asked Me anything for your personal benefit. All that you have requested from Me was for the expansion of My ministry! So, it is not necessary that you should think that I am angry

with you, or have forsaken you. You are My beloved! Yet, you should be aware of one fact. Millions of people from all over the world love you; only those who can be counted on fingers, filled with jealousy, speak and act maliciously against you.

When they spill venomous words against you and when their wicked words soak into your heart, entering through your ears, you tend to ignore the love-filled words and genuine affection of millions of people, who love you and uphold you in all respects. You start brooding over the disproportionate poisonous words of a few particular villains! Therefore, peace in the depths of your heart is disrupted; visitations of the Holy Spirit are obstructed; because of this, the devil gets access to touch your body.

You must ever keep in mind that the voice of your critics, who are filled with the spirit of envy is truly the "voice of the devil". So shut the doors of your heart against the voice of the devil. Just as the fish vomited Jonah onto dry land after 3 days, the disease which has you in its grip now, will vomit you out. You will commence your ministry once again. You should not imagine that I will personally go and destroy your enemies, those children of the devil, who have risen against you. On the contrary, I will make your ministry expand its scope in all directions as never before. Your ever increasing ministry will itself dash against your adversaries like a mighty rock and crush them." As we read in Exodus 1:12, the Lord made His words of wisdom come true!

"But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel"

Yes, my dear depressed fellow workers! How true is the word of God which says that man shall live 'by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' (Matt.4:4). Even today, we can receive this wisdom through the gift of the word of wisdom. Through the help of this gift, we can conquer, whatever circumstances overtake us, with His grace. So, do not be dismayed!

3. Daniel!

According to Daniel 1:3-6, Daniel was only a prisoner of war deported to Babylon from Jerusalem by the King of Babylon. Yet, he was the chosen vessel of God, to plead with Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon for the liberation of thousands of Israelites carried away, like himself, as captives, and save them eventually. So God too, with great compassion, bestowed on him His wisdom and knowledge immeasurably (Dan.1:17 ; 5:11; 6:3).

Because of the wisdom granted by God, he was promoted to the highest position in the kingdom - Chief Administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. He also got the encomium from the king: 'Servant of the living God' (Dan. 6:20). When the king met him formally for the first time and understood the spirit of wisdom within him, he, 'a king of kings' with all the power, strength and glory (Dan. 2:37) fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel and commanded that an offering and incense be presented to him (Dan. 2:46).

The wisdom the Lord had granted to Daniel, was 'par excellence'. Where God's wisdom is manifested, there will be executed 'mighty works' too (Matt. 13:54).

Once Daniel was cast into the den of lions; through faith, he 'stopped the mouths of lions' (Heb. 11:33). Just as Jesus was fully aware, according to John 8:20, and Luke 13:32, that the appointed time of His leaving the world had not yet come, Daniel too might have discerned through the spirit of wisdom, that the time for the completion of the race he was running had not come. That is why, he had the faith to bind the mouths of the lions to escape death.

Recently when we visited Iraq, I was taken to the tomb, believed to be that of Daniel and I saw a mosque built on it. I was amazed to listen to the words of the supervisor there. What he said was that whenever the devil-possessed people

were taken there for 'namaz' (prayers), the devils would scream and come out of those people. I wondered whether the remarkable spirit of Daniel was still hovering over there, even after hundreds of years of his death! How much is God honouring His servant Daniel, even today!

While standing there, the picture of the scenario of the dead man 'reviving and standing on his feet' as soon as the dead body 'touched the bones of Elisha', flashed on my mental screen (II Kin. 13: 20, 21).

Whenever the kings, whom he served, had distressing and perturbing problems in their lives, Daniel gave them words of wisdom and helped them to be relieved. Thereby he protected his own people living in the kingdom.

4. Jesus!

It is good, at this point, to consider for a while, this gift of the word of wisdom, exhibited in the life of our gracious Lord Jesus.

The verses quoted below demonstrate how the wisdom of God came into Him:

"The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (Is. 11:2)

"And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, 'Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?'" (Matt. 13:54)

Yes! People wondered at His wisdom.

a) His mighty words !

"...Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Luke 24:19)

This verse illustrates lucidly how powerful His word was! He Himself has explained the reason for His mighty power of speech, thus: "I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him (God, the Father)." I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me, gave me a command, what I should say and what I should speak" (John 8:26; John 12:49,50).

(i) Adaptability of speech! (According to the comprehensive power of the audience)

Even while speaking to His disciples, He had this in mind. He told them:

"I still have many things to say to you, hut you cannot hear them now" (John 16:12)

Multitudes of very common people flocked from all directions to Him and listened to His words eagerly and with great joy.

"And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

But without a parable He did not speak to them..."

(Mark 4:33,34)

I happened to read an amusing story in a magazine. A small

boy was taken to the family doctor; the doctor ordered the nurse to give the boy an injection for his illness. When the nurse was about to give the injection, the small boy, afraid of the injection needle, created a big scene, screaming loudly, "I don't want the injection."

You know what the nurse did! She told the boy, "Child! Yes, you need not have any injection." She made the boy sit on the floor and drew a figure of a cat on the floor. She asked the boy, "Now, shall we give the injection to this cat?" The boy was so happy; he also joined the nurse, while she pretended to give the injection, to the cat's tail. Then, the clever nurse told the boy, "Young chap, look, I injected the cat; it is quiet as there is no pain at all. You can also take it easily." Then the boy also readily agreed to be injected.

Our dear Saviour too is also like that nurse. He explained to the people deep spiritual truths, through simple parables, filled with the divine wisdom. He, thereby, made the people easily understand them and accept them.

(ii) To the wise men!

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, a wise and respected man, once came seeking Jesus (John 3:1). Our Lord spoke to him in an exalted wise language:

"...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)

When Jesus said this, the learned man was startled. He couldn't understand that truth at all! He questioned the Lord thus: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (John 3:4). As I Corinthians 2:6,7 testify, the Lord who gave to Paul the grace of speaking wisdom among those who are mature, grants the same gift to His servants, even today!

A gifted servant of God, once visited the capital city of a foreign nation. A special Gospel meeting was arranged for the high dignitaries of that country and the ambassadors from other countries. A question arose within his mind as to what theme he should preach about to those intellectuals with their unmatched wisdom. He waited, with tears, at the feet of God; through the word of wisdom, the Lord Jesus Christ gave him the theme "Family life - The gift of God" and taught him explanatory points on that topic. That night, when the servant of God, with inward trembling and fear, spoke those words, the whole learned audience eagerly listened with rapt attention.

Finally, when he gave the altar call, "Those of you, who find no peace or blessing in your family life, come forward; let me pray for you", eighty per cent of them went forward, wept bitterly and accepted the Lord. A couple, separated for about four years, had come to the meeting from different places, without the knowledge of each other; it was an unforgettable spectacle to see them reconcile with each other, shedding tears. How sweet is it to know that even today, the various ambassadors of other countries who were in that one meeting live transformed as the ambassadors of Christ!

Yes! The word of wisdom helps us to give the Lord's message with divine wisdom, even to people of the highest calibre, in terms of their worldly knowledge.

(iii) To those in power!

Some officers were sent to arrest Jesus, during His sojourn on this earth; they came back to those who sent them, empty-handed. When questioned why they did not arrest Him, they replied:

"...No man ever spoke like this Man!" (John 7:46)

Such was the greatness of the word of wisdom, God had endowed Christ with.

Consider the following two verses:

"Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to' him, 'What are you doing?'"

(Eccl. 8:4)

"...divination is on the lips of the king..."

(Prov. 16:10)

When ordinary earthly kings possess so much power in their words, as testified by the two verses quoted above, it is no wonder that the words of the Son of God, who is the King of kings **and** 'the ruler over the kings of the earth' (Rev. 1:5), were packed with power.

It is said that once a servant of the Lord, William Branham of the U.S.A. had gone to South Africa to conduct spiritual meetings. Even those who went to the meeting for fun, had their hearts touched on witnessing the miracles and wonderful signs Christ did in his ministry. One day, a very cruel -looking man, lost control of himself and screamed in a savage manner, "With what power are you doing these things?" in a thundering voice.

Branham is a soft-hearted, soft-spoken man. When this question confronted him, the spirit of wisdom descended upon him mightily. Involuntarily, he answered in a loud authoritative tone, "I am doing this with the might of the living Lord Jesus Christ, whom you do not know." The power and authority in the voice of Branham, shocked that man. Why? The power dumbfounded the thousands of people assembled there. Many surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus, the God of wisdom!

(iv) To the enemies!

When our Lord Jesus lived in this world, His enemies tried to test Him in various ways. We find that they 'plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk' (Matt.22:15) in several ways. Yet, as we read in Matthew 22:22,46 His answers pregnant with wisdom, which He gave to those people, amazed them. From that day, no one dared to question Him any more (Matt.

22:46).

In the case of our Lord's disciple Stephen too, his enemies 'were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke' (Acts 6:10).

"For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist"

(Luke 21:15)

This is the promise of our beloved Saviour to His disciples. Even today, it is not surprising that He grants the same wisdom to the people who do His ministry.

In a certain town, there was a mill employee working in a particular mill. He was much concerned about the welfare of the labourers; he had dedicated his life to fight for the rights of those poor labourers. But he was a stranger to God. There was no connection between him and the Lord Jesus. He knew nothing about Him. Suddenly he was afflicted by a strange disease in his chest, which could not be diagnosed by any doctor. His chest was swollen and became protruded nearly one foot in front.

When he was lamenting one day, "It is better to die than to live", all of a sudden, a bright light appeared from the sky and in the midst of it, our dear Saviour Jesus appeared to him and said, "I am Jesus, who died for you." He touched him and healed him. From that day, his life was entirely changed. He became a devout servant of Jesus; a great number of people were healed by his prayers and found the Lord.

One day as he was walking along a street, he saw a group of people standing under a tree; he started to address the people, explaining his experience and the divine peace that can be given by the Lord Jesus. At that time, a ruffian, living in that street, began to abuse him without restraint and shouted: "Stop your speech and get away from here." The man of God was puzzled; but in his innermost heart, he prayed, asking God for wisdom. God filled him with the spirit of wisdom and spoke to him about what he should do. Accordingly the man of God gripped the hands of that ruffian, who was still screaming at the top of his voice, and said, "I am pained to see that you are standing in the scorching sun; come here to the shade under the tree, so that we can talk." God had granted that word of wisdom at the proper time.

The warmth of love and concern in that word transformed

the ruffian's heart, in a minute; tears were formed in his eyes. He said, "Sir, please go on preaching; let me also listen to your speech." He was a man who had not tasted love in the whole of his empty life; that is why our gracious Lord Jesus prompted His servant to show him love and speak to him loving words. The problem was solved.

"The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned" (Is. 50:4)

As the above-mentioned verse explains, the word of wisdom helps us to speak the correct word of wisdom to the broken-hearted to win them over to the Lord.

Look at our compassionate Lord Jesus! When Jairus was taking Jesus to his house to pray for his fatally sick daughter, he became broken-hearted on receiving the news, on the way, that she was already dead.

Jesus gave him, at that time, a word of wisdom, to strengthen his faith: "Do not be afraid; only believe."

Then He hurried with him to his house and raised his daughter to life.

Hanging on the cross, along with Jesus, one of the robbers, breathing his last, requested Him, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Did not Jesus comfort him saying,

...today you will be with Me in Paradise"
(Luke 23:43)

When Thomas lost his faith utterly, on seeing that his Master was dead on the cross, did not Jesus appear before him, allowing him to put his finger into His side to feel the reality of resurrection and revive his spirit by saying, "Do not be unbelieving, but believing?" (John 20:27). Did not Jesus send the same Thomas to India and make innumerable seekers taste His love through him?

Once a mother came to me with a strange request; by constant weeping, her eyes had sunk in, and her body was a mere "skin and bones". Though only 45, she looked 70. Her request was this: "Sir, my two sons, aged 16 and 18, both met a calamitous end in a car accident on the same day. I keep at home the ashes of their bodies. If you come and place your hands on those ashes, they will come back to life. Please come to my house."

On hearing these words, my heart was shattered. I was overwhelmed by despondency with this thought, "If only I have the same compassion and power which the Lord Jesus Christ had, I too, with His might which raised the dead Lazarus, four days after his death, can do this. But I don't have the millionth part of His love and might!" I did not know how to answer the request of that weeping mother. But, the next moment, the Lord's unparalleled love overflowed in my heart. Embracing the mother, I shared the word of wisdom, given by the Lord with her. I told her: "My dear sister! I too was crying like you, two years ago; the reason was that my beloved 17-year-old daughter Angel, died in a horrible car accident like your children. Even today, agony swells up in the depth of my heart, when I think of her."

The lady was wonder-struck at my words; she asked me in surprise, "You too have lost your daughter! Really!" I said, "Yes!" and added, "Yet, the Lord who gave up His life on the cross has miraculously comforted my wife and me." Then I prayed for her; a divine comfort filled her heart.

Yes! The word of wisdom heals the broken hearts and soothes them.

(V) To the broken hearts! (Due to lack of basic amenities of life)

Look at the verses Luke 5:1-10! There, our beloved Saviour Jesus meets a fisherman named Simon Peter, washing his empty nets, as he could not catch any fish, in spite of his whole night's vigil. The Lord got into his empty boat and sitting on it, preached to the multitude on the shore; His words must have charmed Peter too! So Jesus, who knew the disappointment in Peter's mind, told him, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch" (Luke 5:4). He answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless, at Your word, I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). The fishermen did so and caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking (Luke 5:6).

On another occasion, when Jesus and His disciples faced a situation when they had no money to pay the tax, the Lord Jesus gave Peter a different word of wisdom: "Go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you" (Matt. 17:27).

Even today, when the word of wisdom is given by

the servants of God to people who are afflicted by poverty, financial difficulty and other similar crises, it comes to them like the rare 'nectar' and rescues them from disaster. It induces them to follow our dear Lord Jesus, just like Simon and his companions who left their boats and nets to follow Him.

Once I was conducting a "Jesus Calls" Campaign at Coimbatore, in the State of Tamil Nadu in South India. When the time for final prayer came, filled with the Holy Spirit, I called out the name of a woman and said, "My dear sister Swarnam, you have come here with your family; you have a plan to commit suicide as a family, oppressed by the unbearable burden of poverty and debts, but the Lord Jesus has come here, with His power to help you. Accept Him!" On hearing this, from among the thousands of people, that woman and her husband came running to the dais, crying profusely.

They testified that they entered the venue, on seeing the big crowd of people, while they came out of their house to commit suicide, tormented by problems in their lives.

They also confessed with tears that God's word was like a delicious, sweet nectar to them. They realised the great love of our Saviour Jesus. That family, geared up for suicide, accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour and are still 'living witnesses' to Him, who is giving them what He promised; their children are "Jesus Calls" Young Partners.

My dear ones! The wisdom of Christ helps our ministries today through the gift of the word of wisdom, just as it helped all those people who came to Him in the New Testament days. It gives God's counsel to people immersed in insoluble problems and enables them to be reclaimed from disaster.

Means to Receive the Word of Wisdom!

1. Through men and women who walk with God!

Moses was a man of God, walking with Him and talking with Him face to face (Ex. 33:11). Innumerable people would stand before Moses to obtain the counsel of God in tackling their day-to-day problems, from morning till night. Because of this strain, he would become weary; the people also would become exhausted. One day the priest Jethro, incidentally the father-in-law of Moses, came to the wilderness where Moses was encamped; God thrust a counsel into the mind of Jethro. That counsel is narrated in Exodus 18:19-23:

"(Moses), Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God... Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge...and all this people will also go to their place in peace"

These words of Jethro seemed to be the very words of wisdom coming from God. Therefore, Moses "heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said" (Ex. 18:24).

Once a Christian worker, envious of the successful ministry of another servant of God, being mightily used by God, started a scandal - campaign, writing scurrilous articles in his magazine and grieving the heart of the servant of God.

This resulted in a massive uproar among the believers, who upheld the servant of God. This servant of God, too, was publishing a monthly magazine which was eagerly read by thousands of people all over the world. So he was planning to publish an article, exposing the baseless allegations raised against him. His close friends too encouraged his idea.

But an ordinary Christian worker in a distant town, who had great affection and love for the servant of God hurriedly came and gave him this advice: "Brother, I too read the abusive articles written against you. Please do not mention a single word about the offensive articles in your magazine. The position which your adversary has in the secular and spiritual world is infinitesimal compared to the respect and love you command from people all over the world. Moreover that magazine is a petty one with quite a small readership; your magazine goes all over the world. So, please don't mention the libelous articles in your hallowed magazine at all."

His diplomatic advice seemed to the servant of God as the word of wisdom from God Himself and he accepted it; he, thereby escaped from the tight corner. Gradually the words of the man who tried to scandalize the servant of God, became less and less powerful and unacceptable to the public; but the ministry of the servant of God, who considered the wise advice as coming from God Himself, goes on expanding!

2. Through tongues and interpretations!

"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?

For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people" (Is. 28:9,11)

Don't these verses explain that the Lord will pass on the words of wisdom to us in unknown tongues through the lips of people, who are innocent like babes!

On 21-5-1986, my beloved daughter Angel, lost her life in a tragic car accident; my heart was shattered to pieces. A few months later, I had to speak, participating in a programme. While I was waiting for my turn in a separate room attached to the hall where the programme was going on, I was praying within myself agitated by disturbing thoughts: "Alas! My life itself is a shattered one. What words of comfort am I going to give these men of God, who have gathered here to listen to me?"

At that time a dear sister entered my room bringing with her another woman of God, who was doing the Lord's ministry. She told me in English: "Sir, we come from another State. This lady is an illiterate and does not know a word of English or Tamil. Yet, in her place, our Lord is using her; she has come here with a great longing to meet you, somehow and to receive a blessing from you. Please pray for her!" I told the sister: "Sister, keep on translating in your language as I pray in English."

Saying so, I laid my hands on that illiterate woman of God. That is all! The Holy Spirit descended on her from Heaven and filled her immeasurably. All of a sudden, words came forth from her lips in clear English. I was shocked! From the tongue of that illiterate woman, God Himself was talking to me clearly in English. Discussing my worries, He gave me words of comfort. He told me clearly and firmly that my ministry would expand its

scope, still further, in future. My depression vanished into the thin air.

Yes! Even through the mouths of babes, the word of wisdom can operate and bring to us the apt 'word'.

3. Through direct messages from the Holy Spirit!

When we consider the scriptural verses Acts 8:29; 10:19 ; 13:2,4 we understand that the Holy Spirit can talk to us straight, as other ordinary men do, face to face. Even today the Holy Spirit has the power to sound His words of wisdom in the ears of those who seek Him, guiding them along, just as He sounded in the ears of the saints like Philip and Peter.

There is a place called Kolar Gold Fields in the State of Karnataka, in South India. Several years ago, a mine worker there, a tough man, who did not know the Lord, was ultimately drawn to Jesus by His grace. That man, having tasted the love of Christ immeasurably, resigned his job, with the driving desire to tell the whole world about this wonderful peace he received from Jesus. He was baffled when there came circumstances, in which he had nothing to live on except his faith.

One day there was practically no food at home, for himself and his wife, except water. Both appealed to God, kneeling down, in broad daylight. All of a sudden, a thundering voice beamed: "Be not dismayed, for I am your God" (Is. 41:10). They were startled; thinking that, perhaps, someone is preaching on the street, they looked outside; there was no one. It was very hot; no movement of people in the street at all! They started to pray once again. Again the same thundering voice sounded! They now realised that it was the voice of the Holy Spirit. A new courage surged up in their hearts.

They moved to another city, Bangalore. There too, starvation and hunger lingered on! Without even a proper place to stay, they carried on their ministry by faith. A few young men accepted the Lord through their ministry; still they had no place to conduct their worship even. One young man, among them suggested that they could conduct their Sunday service in an old abandoned railway shed, formerly used to repair railway engines; he led them there. When they entered the place they were surprised and taken aback, as they saw at the entrance to that shed, the verse, "Be not dismayed, I am your God." There, they started their Sunday service. Today, at 5 Station Road,

Bangalore they have built a beautiful church. As you enter this church, you can see this verse engraved at the altar: "Be not dismayed, for I am your God." The name of the pastor is Pastor K.R. Paul.

4. Through visions from God!

"Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city'"

(Acts 18:9, 10)

True to this experience of St. Paul, the Lord can give us His word of wisdom through visions.

In the year 1973, I had been invited to conduct meetings for a few days at the reputed hospital in Vellore, a city in South India. One day when I was praying for blessings in the evening meeting that day, the Holy Spirit showed me how the meeting would proceed in the evening and who would be attending it. He particularly showed me a saffron-clad 'sanyasi' (holy man). He revealed to me a few words of wisdom to be conveyed to him.

I went to the meeting fully prepared. The time for preaching came; I looked around at the audience. Just as the Holy Spirit had shown me earlier, there was a saffron-clad gentleman, standing there. After the sermon, before praying for all, just to prove that 'Jesus is still alive', I pointed out to that gentleman; I told him in the presence of all whatever God had told me about him, through the word of wisdom. He immediately raised his hands and said, "All your words are true!" That day Jesus performed many miracles and drew the hearts of many towards Him.

There is an Ashram (Monastery) in a part of Jaffna, in Sri Lanka called "Christu Seva Ashram". That gentleman in the saffron dress, standing there was none other than the man of God, Rev. Selvaratnam, Head of that Ashram. Next year, he took us to Sri Lanka and made wonderful arrangements for us to conduct spiritual meetings all over Sri Lanka.

5. Through angels!

God sent His angel to Paul with a word of wisdom: *"For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all*

those who sail with you'

Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me" (Acts 27:23-25)

Daniel too was visited by an angel; he said to Daniel:

"At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision " (Dan.9:23)

Just as the word of wisdom was given to Paul and Daniel, we too are granted the word of wisdom through angels, when we pray filled with the Spirit.

In the early days of my ministry, which I executed earnestly and continually, I was engaged in my secular job too. Sometimes, I used to forget my family responsibility completely. I used to spend most of my income for the Lord's ministry and also for the ministry of others. So, at home, there was a financial strain always. Yet, my wife never murmured about it.

One day I returned home only at 11 p.m., after office work and after doing the ministry at various places along with my pastor, according to his request. As I was having supper, my wife asked me, "Do you know what is special about tomorrow?" When I replied in the negative, she said, "Tomorrow is Easter; we have to go to the church. All children will come dressed in new clothes, their parents would have got for them; but we haven't provided our only son Paul even with a modest new dress. I am really distressed and worried."

Her words broke my heart. Saying, "Yes, we will see about it in the morning", I sent her to bed. But I knelt down on my bed and cried: "O Lord, I am so absorbed in doing Your ministry with all my concentration that I entirely forget my wife and my son! There is no happiness at all for them through me. Kindly help me in this time of difficulty." I wept and prayed for several hours, without sleep.

Quite suddenly, an angel appeared near me. He said, "Come down from your bed; open your trunk and see!" I replied, "There are only torn clothes in my old trunk; nothing else." But he persisted, "No, open and look into it." Reluctantly, I got down from my bed, followed Him, and opened the box containing our worn out clothes. There were only my old and torn clothes. The angel, with a smile, asked me to lift the uppermost shirt. I lifted it and turned it round. Lo, I was

thunderstruck to see brand new currency notes! I was greatly thrilled. The angel had disappeared, by this time. After that, I slept off peacefully.

The next morning I asked my wife, "Did you put money in that box?" She put a counter question, "When did you ever give me money to be kept there?" I took out the money and showed her; on seeing the new notes, she too was pleasantly surprised! Need I tell you what happened then? We bought new dresses not only for my son and my wife, but for me too! We had the best Easter that year.

This is just one example regarding worldly blessings. I would like to share with you another example too!

Several years ago, I had been to a place called Bapatla, in South India regarding my official work at the Bank, which detained me there for a few weeks. A poor pastor requested me to deliver the Lord's message at the open air special Gospel meeting held in front of his church. After my official work, I quickly prepared a message and went to the place where the meeting was to take place. There were some people, sitting scattered here and there; some were sitting on the road itself. I was on my knees praying for blessings for my message and final prayer.

Suddenly an angel appeared and giving me a theme, said that God had asked me to deliver a message on that particular topic. I asked him, "What about the message I have already prepared?" He disappeared saying, "I will be back after consulting God." Coming back after a few seconds, the angel reiterated that the Lord was firm about the message which He had given. The angel also explained to me various points I could present, on my request.

That night, I preached the message which the angel had given me. During prayer, the Lord revealed to me details about the people there, to their surprise. Moreover everybody was amazed about another aspect. No meeting had ended so far in that place, without a riot. It seems, usually, the rude ruffians in that area would damage the table, do havoc and scare away the assembled people.

That was why, perhaps, God had sent a special message to them. That message made them tremble in fear. A man, whose custom was to create trouble, tried to run away from the place. While running away, he fell down and fractured his leg; then he turned to the Lord, for ever. I later learnt that no one had ever

tried to disrupt the Lord's Gospel meetings afterwards, there.

Yes! Angels! "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14). How true is this word?

When the Son of God, Jesus Christ was in agony, in the Garden of Gethsemane and when "His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground", did not God send His angel to Him from Heaven, strengthening Him? (Luke 22:43,44). Is it not certain that the same Lord will send His angels to give us words of comfort and wisdom when we live, trusting only Him, and shedding tears of blood?

6. Through the Lord Himself speaking to us face to face!

Moses, was taking along with him millions of Israelites from Egypt, 'just like a father who carries his son' (Deut. 1:31) or 'as a guardian carries a nursing child' (Num. 11:12). Did not God directly speak to Moses, face to face, at times of need and lead him with His personal guidance? Numbers 7:89; 12:8 and Exodus 33:11 narrate a number of these wonderful experiences which Moses had!

The outstanding importance of the gift of the word of wisdom is this! This gift makes God accessible for us, whenever necessary, to see God face to face, in Spirit. It also lifts us up to Heaven in Spirit and enables us to stand before the Throne of Grace and listen to God's words of wisdom.

I know a gifted servant of God. One day after the church service, the pastor of the church invited him to go over to his house. When he went there accordingly, the pastor showed one of his relatives, lying on his bed, at the point of death. The pastor told him with tears, "It is certain that his life will be taken away in a few minutes; please pray for him; plead with God for His compassion." And so, the servant of God knelt down; his eyes fell on the ailing man's wife, standing nearby and the two children she was holding by her hand.

That sight created in him, an indescribable divine compassion and pity. Without his knowledge, he began to shed tears for them. The Holy Spirit descended on him. Jesus, the Son of God appeared near him and asked him why he was shedding tears. The servant of God, without any hesitation, said, "Lord! Please send back the life of this brother." Jesus did not reply; with a smile, He disappeared.

The servant of God was perplexed. But the Holy Spirit took his spirit, too, to Heaven. He was thrilled to see Jesus walking on the golden streets of Heaven; he ran behind Jesus, in spirit. Jesus sat on His throne. Again, He gave a sweet smile to the servant of God and asked him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" (Mark 10:51). Once again the servant of God pleaded for the life of the dying man.

Then the Lord of the entire universe, Jesus pointed to him certain blemishes in the life of his wife, especially her critical disparaging attitude towards His servants. Then He posed a question before him: "Will you make this Known to her?" The servant of God replied, "Lord, certainly I will make this known to her and bring her on to the right path of life." Then the majestic voice of Jesus resounded: "Go your way; he lives" (John 4:50). His voice echoed throughout Heaven.

The next moment the servant of God opened his fleshly eyes; he looked all around the room. His body, from top to toe, was wet with sweat. Looking at the watch, he found that he had been on his knees for an hour and a quarter in prayer. There was a great excitement in the room. The man who was at the point of death, sat up on his bed, fully healed. He said that he was hungry and he be given some- thing to eat' (Luke 8:55). He rose up totally healed. He attended the evening service in the church, sitting in the front row, without any sign of weakness or infirmity.

My dear ones! I may go on recounting different kinds of such experiences. The word of wisdom is verily the 'mercy - gift' granted by God to His servants. It is imperative for those who pray compassionately for others and who wish to get God's word straight from Him and inform the concerned people to possess this precious gift.

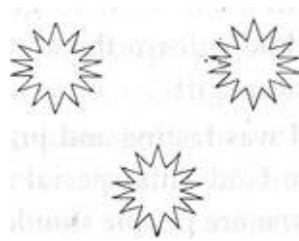
In the year 1970, I was fasting and praying, for a few days, placing before God, this special request: "Lord, through my ministry, more people should be healed miraculously. You must perform those miracles You did in the Biblical days."

One evening, our gracious Lord Jesus appeared in my room. It appeared to me that His face and look were a little stern. He told me one thing: "My son, learn to be grateful about the "Gifts", I have already granted you! The gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge are very rare and unique gifts. I have granted them all over the world to only a very few, who can be counted on the fingers. To you, I have given these gifts wholesomely

and fully. So, first, learn to be a grateful person, on account of these gifts." I have been realising the truth of His words spoken to me that day, only as days are rolling by!

A Christian ministry doesn't merely involve bringing to the people salvation and healing granted by Jesus; it also involves abiding in the Lord, walking and talking with Him so that the people shall be able to receive whatever they need, entirely, through our prayers. The gift of the word of wisdom is a 'rare gift' which helps us in this process.

May the Son of God, Jesus Himself grant this gift in its entirety to all those who desire to walk and talk with God and listen to His voice!



5. The Gift of the Word of Knowledge!

Biblical Reference: I Corinthians 12:8

The Manifestation of True Knowledge!

Romans 11:33 reveals that The Lord of hosts is the abode of true knowledge.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..."

(Hos. 4:6)

God laments about those who are ignorant of Him thus.

At the same time, the Bible comments on those who know God as He is, as follows, in Daniel 11:32: "The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."

Proverbs 28:5 also testifies about them:

"...those who seek the LORD understand all"

Yes! It is the will of God that we should know the Lord intimately and about whatever concerns Him. In Isaiah 11:2, we see that the son of God, Jesus, was anointed with "the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." The matchless gift of the word of knowledge emanates only from God, the origin of all knowledge.

Let us meditate a little extensively on what profit we get out of the word of knowledge.

Knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ!

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent"

(John 17:3)

"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and he to whom the son wills to reveal Him " (Matt. 11:27)

"And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (I John 5:20)

As these verses teach us, when the invisible God came down to this earth, in a visible form, in the name of Jesus, the Son of God, this gift of the word of knowledge was given to man to enable him to find the true nature of God. Daniel 11:32 says that "the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits." We can see from both the Testaments of the Bible, that God has given a clear and specific vision of Himself to all those saints whom He used mightily or to whom He had given His special ministries.

Here are a few Biblical examples typifying the word of knowledge!

1. Prophet Moses!

The Biblical verses Deuteronomy 34:10-12, Exodus 34:28 and Numbers 12:8 testify that Moses had seen and known God face to face. So he knew the true nature of God so intimately that he was able to declare about God in Deuteronomy 33:3, "Yes, He loves the people."

2. Prophet Isaiah!

We read in Isaiah 6:1-3 that Isaiah saw 'the Lord of hosts' sitting on a throne, high and lifted up. That led him to lament, "I am a man of unclean lips." His lips were touched; his iniquity was taken away and his sin was purged (Is.6:5,7). Since he received this sanctification, he was able to predict, through clear divine visions, the advent of Jesus Christ, His ministry and His sufferings for the sake of remission of sins of the entire mankind, one thousand years before they happened.

3. Prophet Ezekiel!

Ezekiel 1:26 and 10:1 prove that God granted His visions to prophet Ezekiel. The Lord revealed Himself to Ezekiel in the appearance of fire with brightness all around. Moreover God revealed to Ezekiel various aspects of His character through visions.

4. Prophet Daniel!

In Daniel 7:9,10,13 we read how Daniel in his 'night visions' could behold the eternal Lord of lords in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ. He describes God, the Father as the 'Ancient of Days' and His Son as the 'Son of Man'.

5. John!

We are told in Revelation 4:1-8 how the Lord reveals Himself as the one who keeps up His covenant and also the one who never forgets His people.

Shall we analyse, in detail, the vision of the apostle John for a while?

John's visions!

As Revelation 1:9 reports, when John had this vision, he was a prisoner in Patmos as a companion in tribulation for the sake of Jesus Christ. He had been broken-hearted because Diotrephes, the elder of the church which John had built up through his ministry, displayed an arrogant, indifferent and hostile attitude towards John himself and the other brethren who were sent by John (III John 9). In Patmos he, as a prisoner, had to do hard work of breaking the special type of stones prepared for building the palace of the Roman Emperor; his condition was pathetic indeed. You can imagine how his heart would have been shattered.

But yet, in this situation, he was filled with the Holy Spirit. "I (John) was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10). Then he saw a glorious vision; he saw his master Jesus, Son of God, resurrected and in His original splendour. On seeing the 'Son of Man' in His true glory, his heart was enraptured. The Son of God laid His right hand on him, who had fallen at His feet and gave him words of cheer: "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:17,18).

Not just that! He gives a glorious and thrilling description of the appearance of the Lord of lords, seen by him in 'Spirit', in Revelation 4.

a) Appearance of God!

"...He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance..." (Rev. 4:3)

This was the appearance of God which the apostle, John beheld!

In Hebrews 11:6, it is written that "he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." See how fortunate the apostle John was! We can imagine that it would have been easy for him to believe in the verity of God after seeing Him face to face, seated on His magnificent throne.

As testified in Song of Solomon 5:16, 'He is altogether lovely.' The beauty of the Lord's face imprinted itself on his mind, making it an unforgettable experience!

b) Rainbow!

John saw a rainbow around the throne of the Lord. As

described in Genesis 9:12-17, the Lord destroyed the people who lived in iniquity, at the time of Noah, with a deluge. But, later, the Lord 'grieved in His heart' and established His eternal covenant with every living creature and all mankind, saying, "Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Gen.9:11). As a sign of that, He set a rainbow in the cloud which can be seen whenever it rains. The Lord graciously enabled John to see the rainbow around His throne, just to make him realise that He keeps up His covenant.

c) Twenty four elders!

God loved the twelve tribes of Israel exceedingly. He commanded them to set two onyx stones, engraving on them the names of the twelve tribes, in the breast plate of judgement of Aaron, the priest, as a continual memorial before Him. God's command was:

"So Aaron shall hear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgement over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the Lord continually"
(Ex.28:29)

Similarly, as we see in the New Testament, Lord Jesus loved His twelve disciples dearly; He loved them to the end (John 13:1). He also gave them a promise: "When the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).

The Biblical scholars aver that the Lord could have made John see twenty four elders sitting on twenty four thrones around the Lord's throne of glory, just to show him that He would never forget the twelve tribes of the old Testament and the twelve apostles of the New Testament.

d) Lightnings, thunderings and voices!

As the Bible says in Job 28:26 ; 37:11-13 and 38:27 the matchless might of God never diminishes; for ever, 'power belongs to God' (Ps. 62:11). The Almighty Lord, through lightnings, thunderings, and voices, demonstrated this vital truth to John. Even though John was languishing as a forsaken prisoner, the Lord reminded him through these visions that the all powerful God was there to still keep watch over him. His

power has not diminished!

e) Seven lampstands!

As revealed in Revelation 1:20 and 2:1, the seven golden lampstands symbolise the seven churches in the midst of which Jesus 'walks'! St. Paul speaks about his engrossing care regarding all the churches thus:

"Besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches"

(II Cor. 11:28)

The same burdensome concern for the seven churches might have oppressed John too! God could have revealed to John through his vision that He too, from the heavenly places, had great, if not an equal concern for the churches. To John, much worried by the burden of the church headed by the hard-hearted autocrat Diotrefes (III John 10), this revelation would have given boundless consolation.

f) Crystal like sea of glass!

John saw in his vision, a sea of glass, like crystal before the throne of the Lord. Revelation 22:1,2 testify that, in this sea, there was water of life and that on either side of the river of water of life was the tree of life the leaves of which were for the healing of the nations. Our merciful Lord Jesus, too, has referred to this 'fountain of water springing up into everlasting life' and the 'rivers of living water', flowing out of the hearts of those who believe in Him (John 4:10 ; 7:38).

Once I had the privilege of visiting the Niagara Falls in Canada. I remember what the guide remarked about it: "Five lakes which never go dry are the origin of these waters; so the waterfalls never go dry."

Exactly so, the vision of the sea of glass must have indicated to John, the apostle: "Even though you are languishing in Patmos as a prisoner, the living water (My Gospel) is still flowing all over the world; no force on earth can stop it. So cheer up and don't worry!"

Did not St. Paul witness in II Timothy 2:9, as follows!

"For which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained"

God might have shown this scene in his vision to convey this mighty truth to him; John might be in chains, but not the word of God.

g) Four living creatures!

John saw four living creatures, full of eyes in front and in back, in the midst of the throne, and around the throne (Rev. 4:6), As we find in Ezekiel 1:10; 10:14, the prophet Ezekiel too saw the same kind of vision. The Biblical scholars opine that the four different faces of these living creatures stand for four types of saintly followers of Jesus.

(i) Face of a lion!

The face of a lion indicates the warriors of faith! In this context we may remember the Biblical verse:

"...the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1)

Thus the lion's face refers to 'bold' people involved in the Lord's ministry. It is recorded in the Bible that some of the mighty men of valour chosen by King David had the 'faces of lions' (I Chr. 12:8).

(ii) Face of an ox!

An ox can do a lot of work quite tirelessly. So it may represent people who toil day and night for the ministry of spreading the Gospel (I Cor. 9:10). Referring to his ministry, St. Paul says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all" (I Cor. 15:10).

(iii) Face of a flying eagle!

We find a reference, in Isaiah 40:31 and James 5:17, to prayer warriors, who wait on the Lord. Praying earnestly and with power, they will 'mount up with wings like eagles!'

(iv) Face of a man!

We can say that the beast which has a face like a man refers to wise men. Ecclesiastes 8:9 confirms it.

"All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: there is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt"

Likewise the following verses denote the fact that man's life is full of hard labour.

"Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey"
(Is. 32:20)

"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return"

(Gen. 3:19)

If a man accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, he is prepared to toil hard for Him day and night and experience the agony he gets consequently. Hence, it will not be an exaggeration if we say that this face seems to represent people, who toil very hard day and night to proclaim the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, look at St. Paul!

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (I Cor. 15:10)

"However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing"

(I Cor. 2:6)

So, we can easily understand that the fourth beast is given the face of a man in order to represent the people, who are filled with wisdom and hard work. Just imagine how greatly all these visions would have consoled the troubled mind of apostle John! After these visions, he would have learnt precisely and clearly what the true nature of God is and what great glory, the resurrected Son of God has! Won't he have received a renewed strength, expelling his feeling of loneliness, weariness and fear, knowing now how, God remembers all those who toil for Him!

My beloved ones, let me reiterate that both the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge are rare and invaluable gifts. When they operate in our lives, it becomes easy for us to get visions of God and His Son. Those scenes of Heaven drive away the deep-rooted, fear in our minds and inspire us to labour for Christ, still further, with renewed strength.

Knowledge of the Son of God!

Our beloved Lord Jesus has said in His last prayer to God the Father for His disciples:

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent"

(John 17:3)

St. Paul makes use of the words "mystery of Christ", when he speaks of Christ (Eph. 3:4). While referring to Jesus Christ as God, 'manifested in the flesh', I Timothy 3:16 defines the manner in which God was made flesh as 'the mystery of godliness'. It is very difficult to understand the relation between God and Jesus Christ, which itself is a mystery. That is why our gracious Lord Jesus, while talking of this mystery, declares, as follows:

"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27)

St. Paul expresses his desire to understand this mystery saying that he counted 'all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus' (Phil. 3:8). He asserts that he wants to,

"...know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings..." (Phil.3:10)

St. Paul, in this verse, wants to know three aspects of the mystery of Christ: "I want to know Christ, the fellowship of His sufferings and the power of His resurrection."

1. To Know Christ!

"And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20)

As we understand from this verse quoted above, Jesus, the Son of God gave St. Paul the understanding power to know Him and His Father. That is why St. Paul could clearly and precisely record in writing, "I know whom I have believed" (11 Tim. 1:12). Read the Biblical verses, John 10:30 ; 12:45 and 14:9! Jesus, the Son of God, while talking of Himself says, "He who

has seen Me has seen the Father."

Matthew 17:1-5 narrate how He displayed His true appearance in all its glory to three of His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. Similarly we too, can see the son of God, in Spirit, through the gift of the word of knowledge; it will also enable us to understand the relationship between Jesus Christ and His Father.

Yearning for the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit, I was praying for them, for several years. At first, God filled me with the Holy Spirit immeasurably. I saw Jesus, face to face, for three hours. Continuing my efforts, I kept on 'wrestling' with God, in prayer, for all the nine "Gifts". One morning, before leaving for my secular work, I knelt down to pray, as I had a little time to spare. And lo! Quite unexpectedly the Holy Spirit filled me, in an abundant measure, with a new kind of power.

As mentioned in Revelation 4:1,2, I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, "Come up, here." Then I saw a hand coming down from Heaven. At this juncture, I received a strangely surprising experience; I was conscious of my praying with great burden on my knees, while simultaneously, I became aware of myself standing outside the kneeling figure and looking at the physical body, praying on its knees. I was perfectly conscious of both the states.

To understand this phenomenon, we may read what St. Paul, who had a similar experience, writes: "And I know such a man - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows" (II Cor. 12:3).

Before I explain my experiences in Heaven, I find it necessary to share with you certain details about Heaven (Jude 3). There are four places in Heaven or the 'Abode of God'

First Heaven!

First is the place of entry. This is where millions of people dwell. The Holy Spirit referred to it as the first Heaven. It is full of souls of people who died at the beginning of their spiritual life, that is to say, just with the experience of salvation alone. Take for example, the robber hanging on the cross. He pleaded with Jesus for His mercy, at the point of his death; he received remission of sins and entered Heaven. All his spiritual experience was the experience of remission of sins and he had no further spiritual growth. Similarly millions of people in the world, today, receive merely this experience of forgiveness of sins and spend the rest of their lives emptily, without growing

in faith any further and go to Heaven. They are satisfied with their experience of salvation, with no further thirst for involvement in spiritual matters. If the glory of the Lord is revealed to them in full measure, they would not be able to bear it at all. So the place where the souls of this kind of people dwell, is comparable to a pleasant hill resort on earth. It is a place which abounds in mountains, hills, dales, streams, rivers, sparkling cataracts, fountains and meadows filled with many splendoured flowers. Millions of souls, redeemed by the blood of Christ dwell there. Yet each soul is in rapture, lost in the presence of Jesus, singing His praise all the time. There is a throne for Jesus Christ; these souls see Him seated on the throne surrounded by innumerable angels. He too, reveals Himself in a subdued glory to match their spiritual standard (Ps. 18:26 ; John 16:12 ; Exodus 20:19). But a remarkably amusing thing is that though Heaven is a very expansive place, the throne of Jesus seemingly appears to be near every individual soul. So no single soul feels that it is away from the presence of Christ. In their midst, the angels pass through to and fro, singing songs of praise. Oh, what a great joyous place the very entrance to Heaven is!

Second Heaven!

There is a second place in Heaven. Here are souls of people, who either at the Old Testament times or at the New Testament times did some kind of ministry and suffered for Christ. There is a little more splendour of God's glory and brightness than in the first Heaven. Jesus said, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor" (John 12:26). God truly honours His servants, however small or insignificant their ministry may be!

Third Heaven!

Showing another place in Heaven, the Holy Spirit termed it as the third Heaven. It is a place of indescribable glory, filled with magnificent bright light. The souls of saints who led an exalted spiritual life and who 'walked and talked' with God, Abraham, Isaac and all those other saints mentioned in chapter 11 of Hebrews dwell there. In one part of it, are seen the disciples of Jesus Christ and the saints of later days, who lived like them.

"Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets"
(Amos 3:7)

As mentioned in this verse God walks amidst them; He shares with them many matters regarding the world and also announces to them what He is intending to do in the world. This is a lofty place. I think this is the place mentioned by St. Paul in II Corinthians 12:1-4. Our Lord pronounced to His disciples thus: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you maybe also" (John 14:2,3).

"And where I go you know, and the way you know"
(John 14:4)

I felt in my spirit that this is the special mansion He has referred to.

Fourth Heaven! (The secluded abode of God Almighty)

The following verses beautifully picture the appearance of the unseen God of Heaven and His heavenly abode.

"Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen"
(I Tim. 6:16)

"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25)

There is a holy spot beneath God's throne, which is in this glorious place. Only here, John witnessed the following scenes:

"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'"

(Rev. 6:9, 10)

Yes! The God of gods has preserved the souls of the people, who have sacrificed their lives for Him and His ministry, under the altar.

Gateway to Heaven!

Now let us see briefly how souls reach Heaven after 'running their race faithfully on this earth'.

I know a servant of God who, while living in this world, had the unique privilege of going, in Spirit, to Heaven, the abode of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit and witnessing the magnificent scenarios there. He had seen many times the various ways in which the souls of those who loved Christ and lived for Him in this world, reached Heaven; and once he explained this phenomenon in one of his sermons as follows:

a) Ladder reaching Heaven!

In Genesis 28:12, we read:

"...a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it"

When some saints die, their souls emerging from their bodies have a vision of such a ladder. With the seeming appearance of their ascending upon it, they happily reach the presence of God.

There was a remarkable saint called F.F. Bosworth. Innumerable are those who were healed by his prayers. On his deathbed he said, "Look here! From Heaven, I see a stream of light coming down; I am ascending on it." The next moment he closed his eyes and also his race of life, quite cheerfully.

b) Chariots of fire!

"Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (II Kin. 2:11)

According to the verse quoted above some see a vision of a chariot, coming down to fetch them above.

There was a saintly man of God called Paul Theophilus Subramaniam in Madras, several years ago. In his ripe old age, one day he preached in Madras Christian College chapel, with high fever, and returned home. He was lying down quite worn out. Suddenly he said, "Here has come a golden chariot to take me to Heaven. Put me in it." Quite immediately, he died.

c) Caught up in the clouds!

"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight"
(Acts 1:9)

"...The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet"
(Nah. 1:3)

A lady servant of God, who laboured hard for the Lord and to bring healing to thousands of sick people, was on her deathbed; the time for the end came. A divine light began to shine on her face, spreading all over her body; the presence of God filled the room like a cloud; her life was taken away, peacefully.

d) Invitation from kith and kin!

"Then behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem"
(Luke 9:30,31)

Even as Moses and Elijah came down to prepare Jesus Christ for His death, as it were, and to welcome Him back in Heaven, many in their deathbeds feel and say, before they die, that their kith and kin who loved Christ while they lived in this world have come from Heaven to give a warm welcome to them.

Recently a pastor in Madras, mightily used by the Lord for His ministry, at the point of death mentioned the name of his father, who had lived a devoted life, and said, "My father calls me; let me go to him", with great joy.

e) Escort of angels!

"So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22)

Many years ago there lived in Vellore (South India) an elderly gentleman called Devanesan John. At a time, when he was not known to me at all, he wrote to me a letter asking me to pray for his eldest son, sick unto death. I wrote to him: "Sir, your son's life cannot be saved. But at the time of death, he would look at you and say, 'My dear father! Mother! Do not weep! An angel has come to escort me to Heaven; I shall go with him.' This will be a sign for you that your son is going to Heaven. So console yourselves." When things happened exactly as I had written to them, the parents received great comfort.

f) Welcome by Jesus!

"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'"

(Acts 7:55 56)

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was waiting in Heaven to receive the soul of Stephen who dared to die for Him.

I know a servant of God who is declaring the love of Jesus Christ all over the world, through largely attended Gospel meetings. Once, taken very ill, he had to go through a serious operation and was convalescing, still weak and pale. At the same time a precious colleague of his, who was of immense help to him in arranging his Good News Meetings as his Campaign Manager, died quite unexpectedly. On the advice of the doctors, the news of his death was not broken to that servant of God! Yet, he had a knowledge of his Campaign Manager's end through a vision.

He saw his colleague, going to Heaven, dressed, as usual, in his fine clothes. An angel who was awaiting him called him by name and said, "Do come! Lord Jesus is eagerly waiting for you" and led him to Jesus. The Lord embraced him and said, "My son! Of all the good tasks you had performed for me in the world, the greatest was your organizing several Good News Meetings and thereby helping thousands of people to turn to Me."

"...Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord"

(Matt. 25:21)

Saying so, He embraced him lovingly; the great delight visible in my colleague's face cannot be described in words.

After describing various places in Heaven and several ways of reaching there, let me continue with my vision, when I felt two states of being - the kneeling figure and the other standing outside it. I was lifted, in Spirit, by the hand, across the cloudy skies and the star-studded celestial regions up into Heaven. What I saw there thrilled me! Millions of people were sitting under the shades of lush green trees by the side of cool fountains, engrossed in singing sweet songs of praises to the Son of God, Jesus. I saw thousands of angels passing along, singing the praises of Jesus along with those people, and busily welcoming the new souls of people who have 'run their races faithfully on the earth.' Thousands of other angels were there, praising the Son of God, standing before His throne of glory; some were flitting down to the earth to carry out His commands (Rev. 5:11).

Then I found myself standing before the throne of the Son of God. I was fascinated by the sweet smiling face of Jesus. Jesus asked me, "What do you want?" Without any hesitation I replied, "Lord, I want all the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit." The Lord just smiled! He didn't reply me. Taking a cue from my request, someone from behind interceded on my behalf, as follows: "Lord, the harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few, as you have spoken. This young man is prepared to undergo any suffering for Your sake. All he needs, according to him, are all the nine "Gifts" only. Why don't you grant him his request?" The pleading went on and on, on those lines. Jesus merely smiled, and said, "Well, let us go to the Father." Then He disappeared.

Again, I was lifted up, again in Spirit, to another place. It was an entirely different place. It looked like a place surrounded by snow - capped mountains; that 'snow' might have been the encircling glory of God. Absolute silence, peace and serenity reigned there. There was a very high white throne. As revealed in I Timothy 6:16, God is one "who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see." Yes! The whole place was pervaded by a bright flood of light; I could only feel the presence of someone on the throne, but I could not make out the entire Figure; I felt that the Figure was enveloped by a snowy screen. Suddenly a thundering voice sounded from the throne:

"What do you want?"

The whole place rang with echoes of that question, making me tremble. I replied softly, "Father, I want all the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit." For a short while there was a painful pause and silence. Then the thundering voice echoed once again, "Do you want Me or My "Gifts"?" I was at a loss for a reply, when I was agitating myself about what In reply, the same voice which interceded with Jesus for me earlier, gave me a counsel, "Say that you want Him."

Then only I understood that my adviser was no one else but the Holy Spirit. How true the experience referred to in Romans 8:26 is! "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

I gave the same reply. I could see from the slight shifting movements of the Figure on the throne, that He was extremely

pleased with my reply. All of a sudden, there appeared the face of Jesus, the Son of God portrayed on what appeared to be the bosom of the great Figure (John 1:18).

From that loving face multi-coloured rays beamed towards me and even pierced through me. The next moment, I opened my eyes; I was on my knees in my house, yet. I was wet with sweating from head to foot. The divine vision had turned my vigour to frailty in me (Dan.10:8). My faith and ideas about God underwent a tremendous change. How can my life not be transformed after seeing a vision of the mighty 'Triune' God! Neither can I ever forget that enchanting smile on the face of Jesus, as long as I live!

Then onwards, all the nine "Gifts" started operating in my life. My ministry started 'flaming up' into variegated dimensions. Indeed, many sufferings and tribulations intervened; but through the word of knowledge, the presence of Jesus, the Son of God also came seeking me, and freed me from all kinds of suffocating situations. Even today, only His presence is inspiring me to continue and execute the Lord's ministry.

2. To know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings!

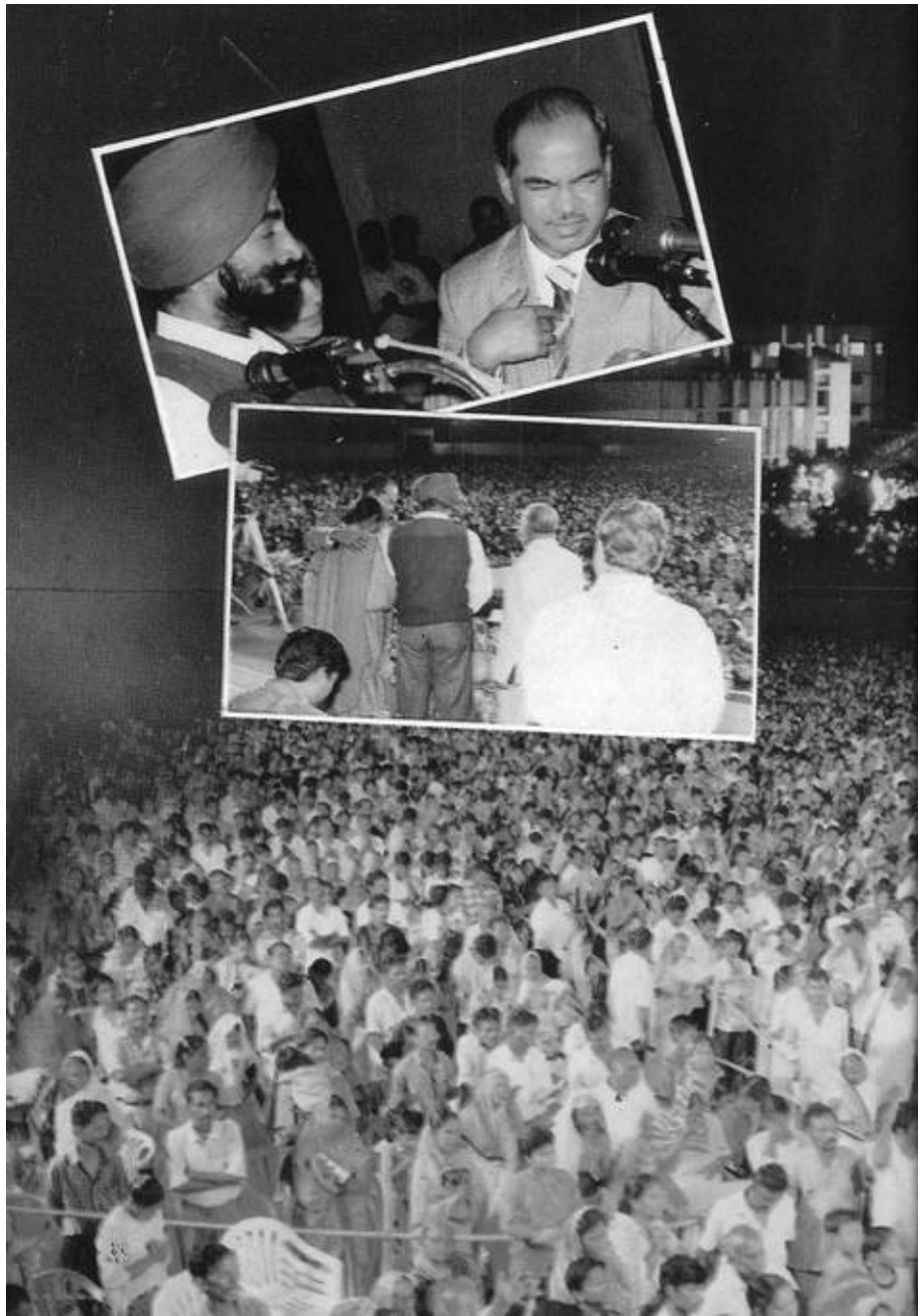
a) Mental agony!

Hebrews 5:7 ; Mark 14:33,34 ; Luke 22:44 and Matthew 26:38 tell us that a feeling of loneliness and fear of death tortured the Lord Jesus before His crucifixion. As reported in John 6:64,70, the very sight of the traitor, Judas, who, He knew, would betray Him, should have constantly troubled Him.

God, once, revealed to a man of God, the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, in a vision. On one side, His disciples were slumbering. Jesus was praying; His sweat, like drops of blood falling down. On another side, at a distance, was standing Satan anxiously expecting that Jesus would refuse to go to the cross, for fear of death. But when Jesus, in the end, after a struggle, subdued Himself to His Father's will saying, "O My Father...not as I will, but as You will" (Matt.26:39), Satan trembled and dejectedly lamented in anguish, "Alas! I have lost; I have lost."



Dr. D. G. S. Dhinakaran
preaching the word of God
with sovereign authority
to millions of people!



All people, irrespective of caste, creed, religion or nationality, participate with great rejoicing, in the "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings! This is a unique feature of these meetings. Jesus said,

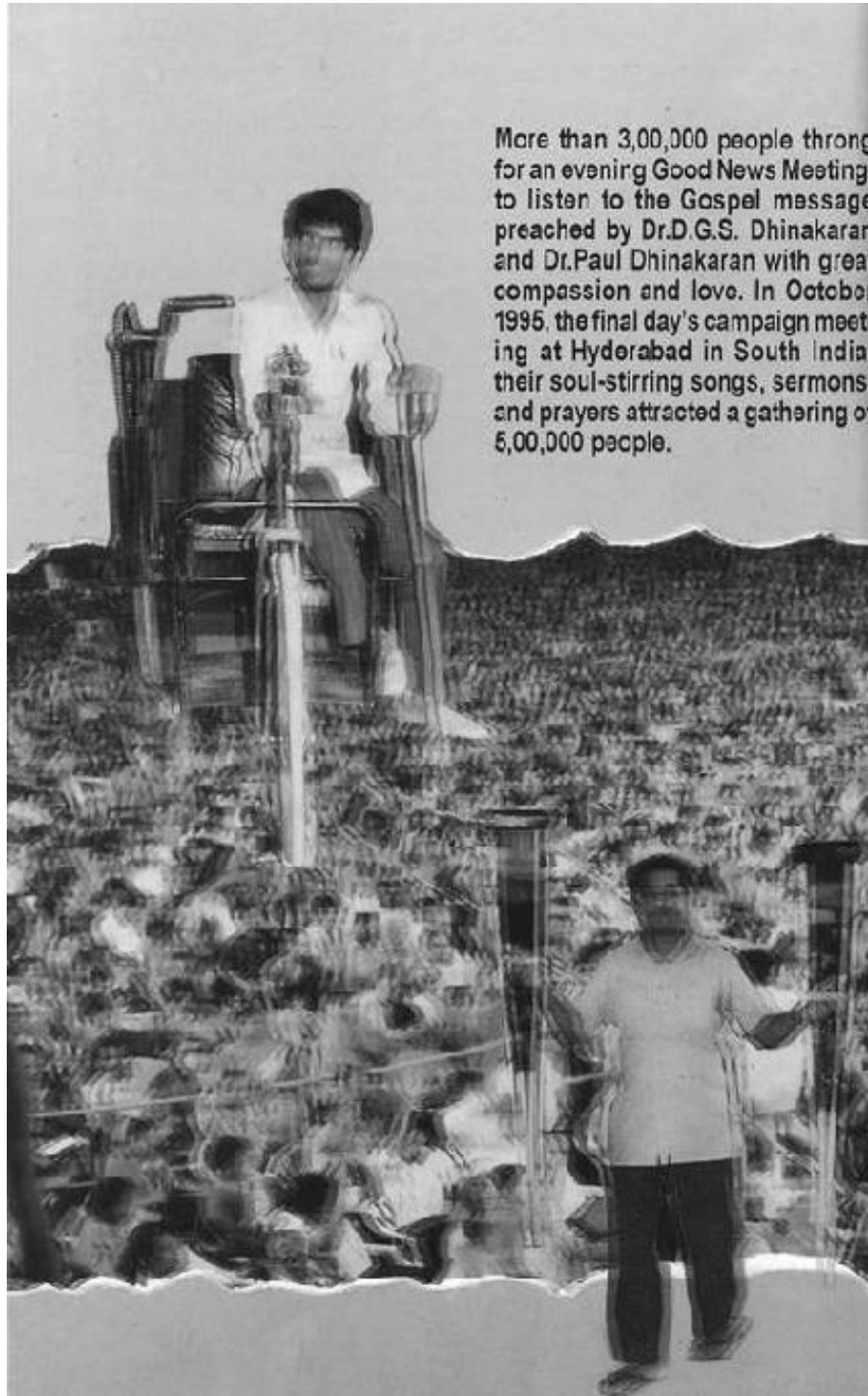
"Freely you have received, freely give" (Matt. 10: 8)

Accordingly, Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran and Dr.Paul Dhinakaran filled with the Holy Spirit and love of Christ receive all people and pray for them with tears.

The secret of the success of their ministry, and thronging crowds of people in all the "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings everywhere is, the limitless compassion of Christ they bring from Him to these people through their messages and prayers.



More than 3,00,000 people throng for an evening Good News Meeting, to listen to the Gospel message preached by Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran and Dr.Paul Dhinakaran with great compassion and love. In October 1995, the final day's campaign meeting at Hyderabad in South India, their soul-stirring songs, sermons, and prayers attracted a gathering of 5,00,000 people.





Some scenes illustrating the wonderful miracles wrought by the mercy of Jesus through the compassionate, intercessory supplications of Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran and Dr.Paul Dhinakaran.



An illustration of how Jesus, calls the names of depressed people and performs miracles, in "Jesus Calls" Campaigns!

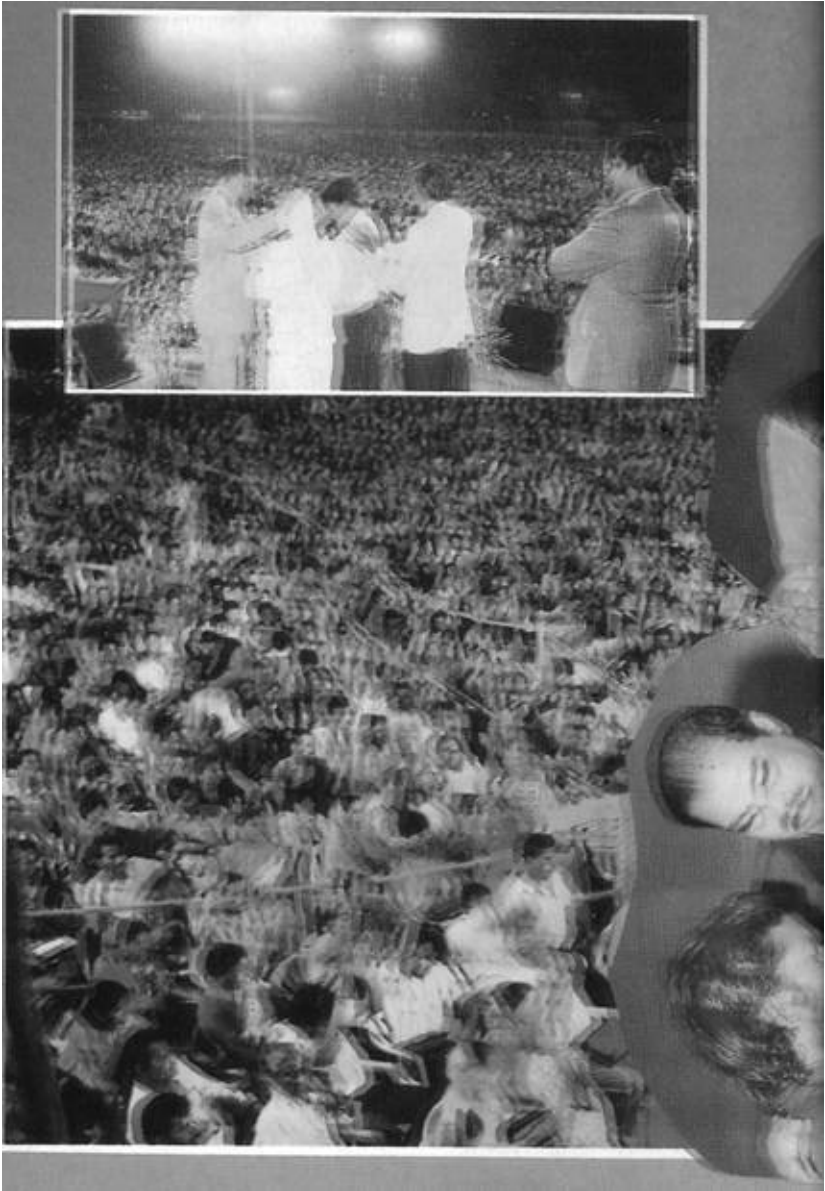


The couple Mr & Mrs. Swarnam, while proceeding to commit suicide casually entered the venue where "Jesus Calls" Good News Meeting was conducted in Coimbatore, in January 1994. The compassionate Jesus called them by name and saved them.

Mr. Thangachan, a fearful man who received a call from Jesus and a new life in Kottayam (Kerala) meeting in 1986, seen along with Dr. D.G.S. Dhinakaran. In the next picture is seen Mr. Thangachan and his family.

In April 1995, at the Tiruchur (Kerala) meeting, Jesus called 'Esther' by name and invited her to do His ministry. She was thunderstruck, since she had travelled hundreds of miles to come to this meeting and God called her name and spoke about her future.





As a sign to prove that Jesus is STILL ALIVE, Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran invites people to the dais, in "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings, and reveals to them the secrets of their lives and God's plans for them for their future.

These rapturous scenes thrill the people, who attend these meetings and present to them a living Christ.







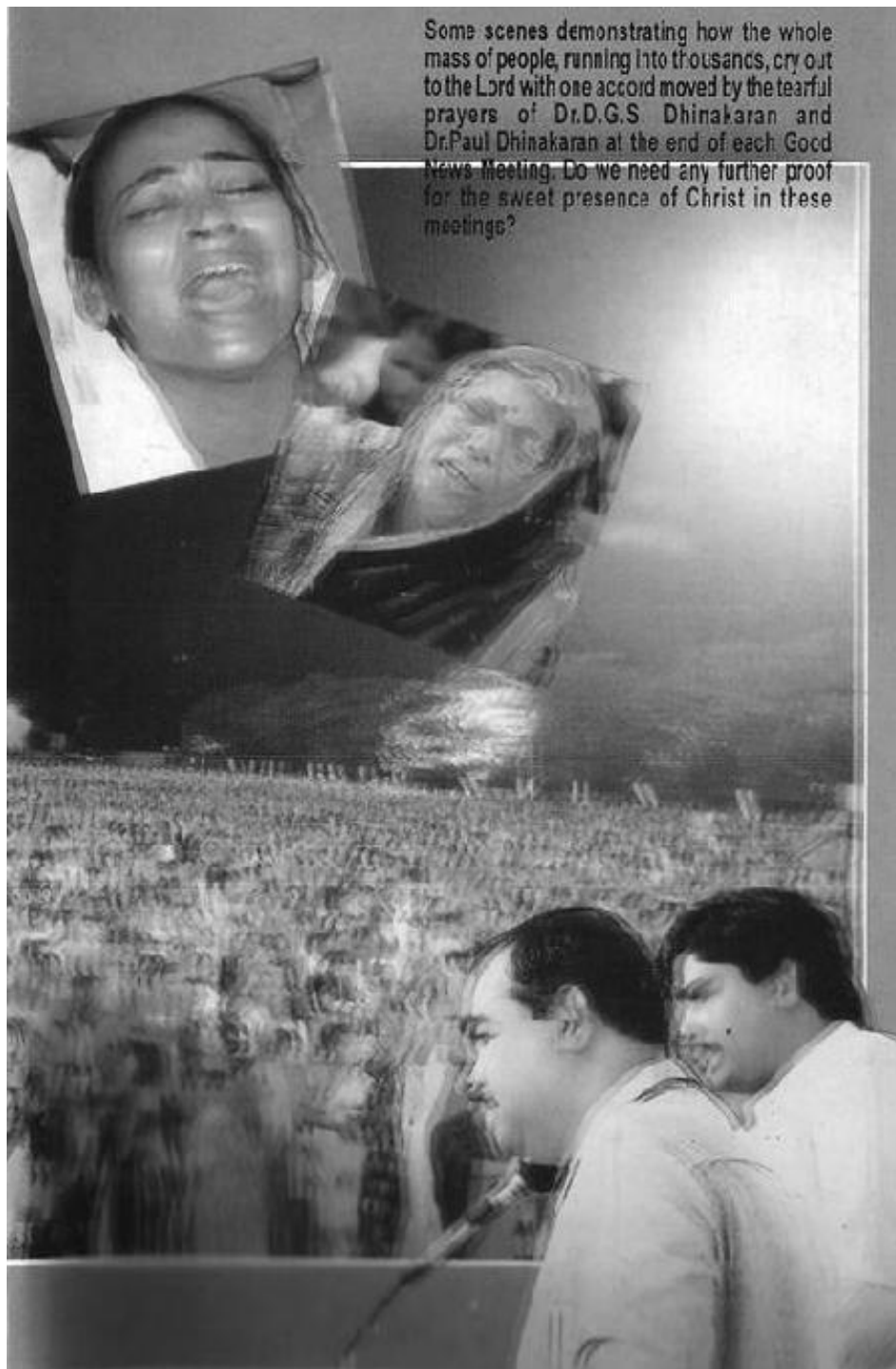
Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran in the company of world
renowned servants of God - Dr.T.L. Osborn,
Rev.John Osteen, Rev.Oral Roberts and
Pastor Benny Hinn!

In "Jesus Calls" Campaigns, abroad, too, the
presence of Christ enthral's thousands of people.





Some scenes demonstrating how the whole mass of people, running into thousands, cry out to the Lord with one accord moved by the tearful prayers of Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran and Dr.Paul Dhinakaran at the end of each Good News Meeting. Do we need any further proof for the sweet presence of Christ in these meetings?





“Jesus Calls” Institute of Power Ministry!

7134 Evangelists for Christ have been trained and moulded as ‘Ambassadors for Christ’ (II Cor.5:20), in India, Malaysia, Singapore, the U.S.A., Germany, Sri Lanka and South Africa through this power ministry.





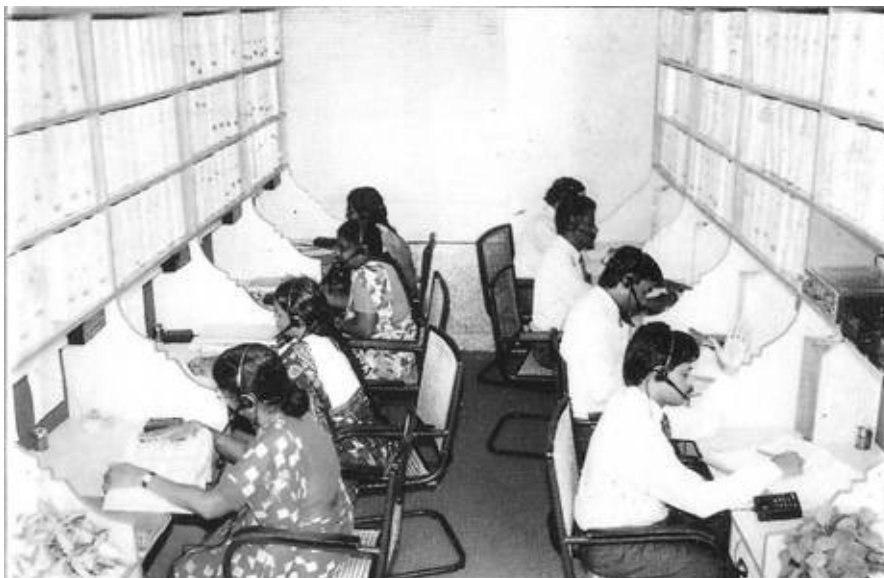


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“Jesus Calls” Prayer Tower!

A symbol of hope for despondent people,
tortured by thorny problems of life.

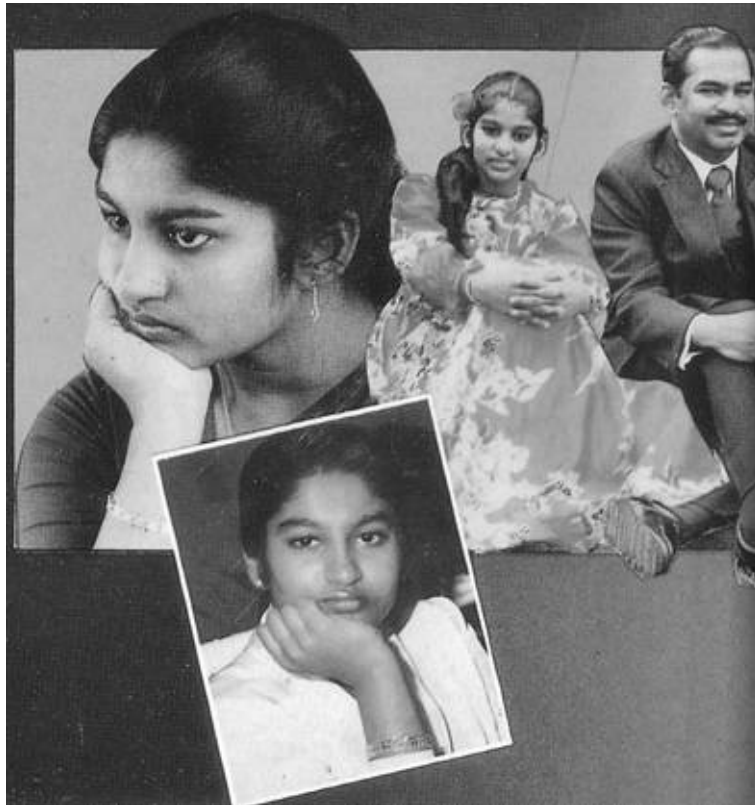




"Jesus Calls" Prayer Tower!
 (Functions round the clock in Madras)
 Telephone numbers : 044 - 4937722/4937753
 Fax: 91-44-4936988/4914911

"Jesus Calls" prayer warriors pray over the phone and bring God's blessings and solutions to people who contact the Prayer Tower from all over the world in times of need for deliverance from addictions, sicknesses and other problems.





Our unforgettable darling daughter Angel in her various moods!
She died in an accident on 21.5.'86, when she was just 17- years- old.
The light is gone! - To be with the true light of the world, the Lord
Jesus Christ!



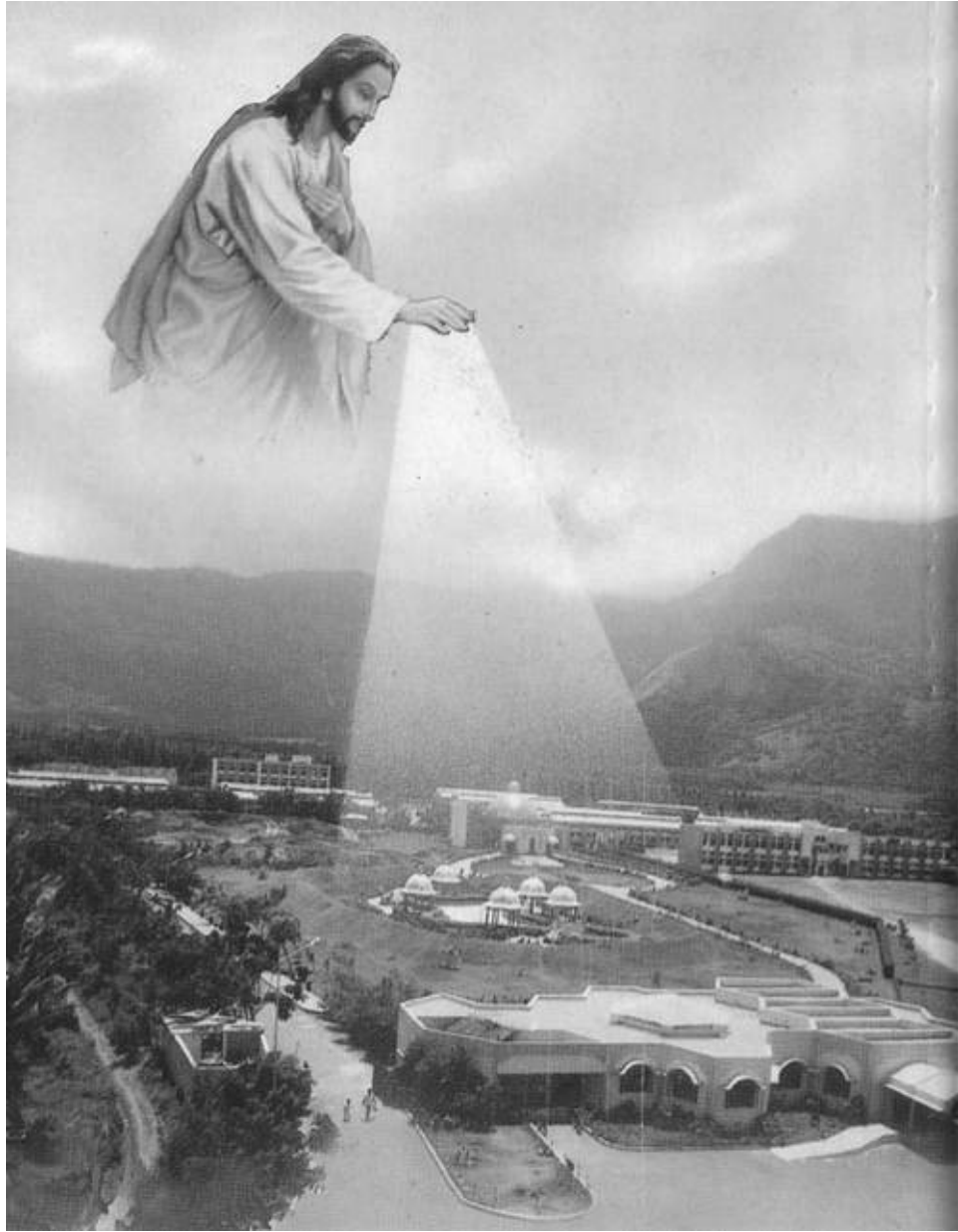


Karunya Institute of Technology, near Coimbatore, in South India, standing up to the glory of God, amidst a serene environment, surrounded by enchanting hills and heart-warming natural sceneries, and blessed with a salubrious and congenial climate and plenty of water supply.

Late Mr.S.Duraisami, respected father of Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran. His name will ever remain in the campus of this college.

When not an inch of land was for sale in this God-chosen area, he laboured with a burden for Christ and persevered till his last breath to acquire vast lands to build up the institute. He was 73 years of age, at that time. He walked many miles everyday in this task.







BETHESDA PRAYER CENTRE!

It is located in Karunya Nagar, near the textile city - Coimbatore, South India.

Hundreds from all over the world visit, everyday, to pray and be blessed.

Bethesda Prayer Centre functions from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on all days and from 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. on all holidays.

Special Healing Service is conducted on all Sundays from 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.





Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran with his family members!

(Left to right) Mrs.Evangeline Paul Dhinakaran, Dr.D.G.S. Dhinakaran, Sharon Angel, Dr.(Mrs.)Stella Dhinakaran, Samuel Dhinakaran and Dr.Paul Dhinakaran.

Ever since Dr.Dhinakaran started his ministry, Dr.(Mrs.)Stella Dhinakaran has been tirelessly ministering along with him, extending her invaluable support to all the nineteen facets of "Jesus Calls" ministry.

In each "Jesus Calls" Campaign, she conducts special meetings for women and families. God has been mightily using her as an instrument for creating a spiritual revival amidst women. Her special TV programmes for women and women's prayer groups and conferences help to emancipate women.



b) Physical agony!

in Mark 15:15-20 and John 19:1-3, we read that Jesus was scourged with thongs. Each thong had nine hooks; each lash of the thongs would tear off the flesh of the body. We can easily imagine what great physical agony Jesus would have undergone. But yet, He, according to Isaiah 53:7, never opened His mouth and stood as a lamb led to the slaughter, because it was the will of the Father that He should take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses (Matt. 8:17). Jesus bore all His physical sufferings patiently.

Once I had the privilege of listening to the sermon of a Sister from Mexico, who was being mightily used by the Lord. Once, she was bedridden for months together, afflicted by a terrible heart disease. Her ministry could not be continued; she had to depend on somebody else, practically for every day-to-day need - to get up from bed, to change her dress, to eat...etc. She spent all her days in tears; she became 'ugly and gaunt'.

One day, all of a sudden, she heard the voice of Jesus asking her, "Have you accepted all these diseases as they are?" The lady meekly said, "Yes!" Then the voice said, "Rise up immediately and go to the church." When she hesitated, thinking of the advice of the doctors not to get up from bed, the voice repeated the same command once again. With great difficulty, she rather forced her helpers to dress her up; then she went to the church along with them and took her seat. At the end of the service, when it was time for the Holy Communion, people were moving towards the altar in a row.

But this lady was in a dilemma! Suddenly Jesus appeared there and displaying the wounds in His body said, "These wounds are for you!" That is all! A divine power beamed through her entire body. All her diseases vanished. She was restored to her perfect health and even today she is doing a great worldwide ministry for the Lord.

Yes! The gift of the word of knowledge gives us visions of the great sufferings which Jesus underwent physically and strengthens and builds up our faith.

c) Spiritual agony!

Jesus lamented on the cross:

"...My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?"

(Matt.27:46)

He was surrounded by darkness. There come such times in our spiritual lives, too, when we are surrounded by darkness.

The famous revival termed 'Wales Revival' by the spiritual world, was due to Evan Roberts. God used this simple man mightily to create a remarkable revival in England. Countless people cried, confessing their sins, and accepted Christ as their Saviour. Nonetheless in the end, a horrible darkness surrounded his mind - a kind of mental depression regarding himself. I happened to read this account in a book written by a saintly man Gordon Lindsay.

If we can truly understand through the word of knowledge that Jesus Christ passed through the same experience, it will pave the way for our holding on to Him firmly when we are surrounded by darkness.

Particularly, if only the pastors who celebrate Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, during the Holy Communion service have seen in a vision, through their spiritual eyes the sufferings of Christ, while administering to the people the bread which is Christ's body and wine, which is Christ's blood, the very manner in which the service is being conducted will undergo a sea-change. Then, when they take up the bread which is a symbol of the broken body of Jesus, in their hands and say, "This is the body of Christ, broken for you" a divine sanctity will be manifested in the service through them. Isn't it true?

Once I had been to Bangalore on an official duty. Early morning on a Sunday, a Catholic priest, a stranger to me, phoned up and said, "Brother, today is Sunday and you will definitely attend some church service. Why not you come to our church? I was shocked as this was the first time I was invited to participate and preach in a Catholic church! Nevertheless, unable to resist the force of love in the voice of the priest, I went there. The priest took me into the church and made me sit near him at the altar. He made me preach from there. He made me participate in the Holy Mass too, giving me the bread, the body of Christ.

After the service I asked him, "Father, I am not a Catholic. Will it bring any problem to you, as you have allowed me to participate in the Holy Communion?" You know what he replied! "Brother, the bread which is Christ's body belongs to ALL His servants. Who am I to refuse it to you?" What induced

him to act and talk in this manner? It is because of his having had a vision about our fellowship of the sufferings of Christ.

That is exactly why the gift of the word of knowledge is vital for us. If only this gift descends on all the servants of Christ, it will bring through the visions of the sufferings of Christ, a profound unity and oneness of mind among all the churches, overnight.

3. To know the power of Christ's resurrection!

As we see in Matthew 27:65,66 the tomb of Jesus was made secure by 'sealing the stone' and 'setting the guard'. Yet He came out, victorious over death, as one who is ever alive. It is very difficult for simple people like us to understand His exalted experience. The only way to understand the power of the resurrection of Jesus is to be endowed with the gift of the word of knowledge.

Pastor Colton Wickramaratne, a reputed pastor in Sri Lanka narrated a miracle which he experienced in his ministry, while addressing a Gospel meeting. A young girl, known to him, was bedridden, seriously ill. Her condition was so pathetic that not only the doctors, but also common people around, were aware that she could no more stir out of her bed and live normally. Still, the pastor regularly went to her house, conducted prayer meetings there and shared the love of the Lord with her.

One day that girl told him, "Pastor, Jesus appeared to me in a vision and He has promised to heal me." She gave the details of the specific time and the specific date for the miracle too, as revealed to her by Jesus. So, on that particular day, according to her desire, he went to her house with a group of people; they all started praying for her with one accord. Nothing happened even just one minute before the predicted time. Then the clock chimed that exact hour. Oh, wonder of wonders! The power of the resurrection of Christ burst into her frail body all of a sudden! Involuntarily, she got up from her bed. She moved to a corner of her bed, knelt down and praised Jesus and began to exult in the wonderful miracle. The people, who were around, were stunned! When she got up from her knees, she had received perfect health. Today, she labours very hard to spread the glory of Jesus all over the world.

Yes! Pastor Colton, through this miracle, saw with his own eyes the manifestation of the power of the resurrection of Jesus. When the gift of the word of knowledge operates in our

life, it graphically engraves in the depth of our heart Christ's suffering and His resurrection, making us feel that they are happening before our very eyes.

Just see the life of St. Paul! He had not been at the 'Last Supper', Jesus had with His disciples, before going to the Garden of Gethsemane. Yet, when we read I Corinthians 11:23-26, we see that St. Paul gives a graphic and true picture of the 'Last Supper'; how the Lord took the cup and the bread, how He blessed them and what He said while He broke it and distributed it among His disciples. The whole portrayal is perfect in every detail; as though he had been at the 'Last Supper' personally. How was it possible? In I Corinthians 11:23, he himself gives the answer; "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you." Again he says, *"For neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ"* (Gal.1:12)

My beloved ones! Through the gift of the word of knowledge, we receive many clarifications about several inscrutable questions: Who is God? What is His Form? Who is Jesus Christ? What is His true appearance? What were His sufferings in this world? What is the power of His resurrection? ...etc.

Yes! We get the answers to these profound questions only through the unique gift of the word of knowledge.

Knowledge of Man!

The gift of the word of knowledge helps us to know any man as he really is. Talking about man's heart, the Bible says:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9)

This verse, in fact, throws a challenge, viz: who can know the heart of man? Again, the Bible defines the quality of the heart of man thus:

"For as he (man) thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov.23:7)

So it is imperative that we should know the thoughts of a man to judge him, as he truly is. That is why I Samuel 16:7 says, *"...man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart"*

As Hebrews 4:13 reveals, "There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him." Revelation 1:14 and 2:18 reveal the astounding fact that

the eyes of the resurrected Lord Jesus are like a 'flame of fire', which are powerful enough to see through the heart of man. During His sojourn on this earth, too, He had this power abundantly, as testified by the following verses:

"But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man"
(John 2:24,25)

Yes! This gift of the word of knowledge can give the servants of God the same power to understand the heart of man, which is in God, the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son.

Now, let us see how the gift of word of knowledge enables the servant of God to find the condition of a man's heart

1. The hearts of people seeking personal prayers!

John 1:46,47 demonstrate how Jesus, the Son of God, with his eyes, a flame of fire, saw through the heart of Nathanael, as soon as he espied him, saying, "...Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" He was able to discern correctly that Nathanael's life was a pure and upright one.

In the same way, the apostle Peter was able to look into the heart of Simon, who had been a sorcerer earlier and pronounced:

"For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity"
(Acts 8:23)

The Son of God, Jesus, was moved with compassion, when He saw the broken-hearted people; the reason is that He had the power to see that their hearts had been broken. Turn to John 5:6. When Jesus saw the sick man at the pool of Bethesda, lying helplessly for thirty eight years, He had the power to discern immediately that 'he already had been in that condition a long time'. Quite voluntarily He went to him, asked him, "Do you want to be made well?" and healed him. Jesus Christ was capable of discerning the hearts of men broken by sin. As Luke 19:1-6 tell us, the short- statured Zacchaeus 'climbed up into a sycamore tree', just to have a good view of Jesus; but the Son of God, Jesus, came straight to the tree, as though appointed already, and looking up, called him by name. He told him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." (Luke 19:5).

"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jer.29:13)

"But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him"

(I Cor. 8:3)

According to these two pronouncements, Jesus could perceive the heart and even the name of that person hiding amidst the branches of a tree. He imparts the same power to His humble servants through the gift of the word of knowledge.

Several years ago, I had been to a place called Karthikapalli in South India, to share the word of God in a meeting, attended by a small gathering of people. After the meeting, the people lined up for personal prayers. When a particular man came, he displayed both his hands to me; all the fingers were clenched tight and he could not open up or stretch his fingers at all. He cried out to me, "Please help me!" My heart was broken, when I saw his pathetic condition. Taking both his hands into my own, I cried to the Lord for his healing.

Quite suddenly I told him, "My dear brother, you have slain about 50 people with these hands; because of those murders, God's punishment is on you; that is why your fingers have been closed up! You must first cry out for mercy to Lord Jesus and ask for forgiveness of your sins. Then He will heal you." All those around, who heard these words were quite amazed! The reason was that they were fully aware of the man's life story; he had been a notorious murderer. They knew that my words were true.

Yes! When endowed with the gift of the word of knowledge, we come to understand the hearts of people. God will bring before our eyes the very picture of their past activities and their life stories.

When I preach in public prayer meetings, in order to generate 'Faith' in the hearts of the people, I generally use to invite a few from among the vast masses of people to the dais, led by God. When, with the power of God, I tell them their life story in front of all the assembled people, they break down and cry out bitterly. When people see for themselves, with their own eyes, how God is so near and how He intimately knows us, their faith is triggered and they receive a fresh hope in their hearts. This is made possible by the gift of the word of knowledge.

I had been abroad, two years ago. One of the leaders of that particular country was present on the dais, one day, when the meeting went on. After the meeting, when they were about to introduce him to me, he himself came up, knelt down before me, and said, "Please, bless me!" The reason for this was that

he had witnessed, during the meeting, how people, called by me through this gift of the word of knowledge, came up to the dais and gave their witness and sometimes wept bitterly when I told them their life story. Seeing this, his heart had faltered. The people, there, who saw him kneeling were shaken because he had always opposed to preaching faith in Christ, as he had seen the hypocrisy of some professing love for Christ.

God performed another miracle! When I laid my hands on him and started praying for him, I prayed not for him, but for his wife, languishing in pain at home. This stirred his heart and made him realise the power of Jesus Christ. He wondered, saying, "Sir, all you said about my wife is absolutely true! How were you able to come to know of it?" His life later was transformed into one that gave comfort to many people!

Yes! The gift of the word of knowledge is very essential to us, so that we can understand the hearts of the people and help them accordingly. Consider what the prophet Samuel told Saul, who sought his help:

"...tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart" (I Sam. 9:19)

As this gift operates even today, we can find solutions to all problems in the lives of people who eagerly seek our help. This gift touches even the hearts of great scholars and exalted people in high positions in the world.

2. People who are far off!

It is not right to think that this gift of the word of knowledge can be used to help the people who come in person for prayers only. Please refer to Acts 9:11,12.

Jesus appeared to one of His disciples, Ananias. He told him about the man Saul, to whom He had, a little earlier, appeared in a vision and drawn him to Himself. He revealed to Ananias all details about Saul, where Saul was and what he was doing at that point of time quite vividly.

"So the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.

And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight" (Acts 9:11,12)

This is how the gift of the word of knowledge operates! All people cannot meet us personally and seek our help even though we devote 24 hours of the day for this purpose. So from

the place where we stay and pray, we can help the people who seek our prayers from far away, telling them all details and solutions for their problems through this matchless power of God.

Several years ago, I was conducting "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings in Krishnagiri, in South India. During an evening meeting, led by God, I asked for the tin box containing Prayer Requests of the people, to be brought to the dais. Hundreds of Prayer Requests were there. I asked the pastor who presided over the meeting, to pick out one Prayer Request from the box, and read it. That request was: "Brother, please pray for my father who is seriously ill (in a particular town) in Sri Lanka. I am worried about him."

Moved by the Spirit of God, I called the sister who had written it, to the dais. Then I prayed for her father, with her standing near me. The gift of the word of knowledge came upon me; armed with that gift of the Holy Spirit, I was able to see before my eyes her house in Sri Lanka and the very room in which her father was lying ill. When I pleaded with God for him, I saw our gracious Lord Jesus touching him. When I described the details of her house, the sick man's bed and his room, the woman agreed, saying, "Perfectly true!" She wept aloud.

Finally I said to her, "Jesus has touched your father just now; he has been healed completely. You must contact him immediately and announce the news in the evening meeting tomorrow." Just so, the woman testified that her father had received the healing, the next day. People were pleasantly surprised! The name of Lord Jesus Christ was glorified. I can point out thousands of anecdotes of similar kind!

3. Reaching places of need in spirit!

These are the harsh words of the prophet Elisha to his servant Gehazi:

"...Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?" (II Kin. 5:26)

Gehazi was the servant of Elisha; he had secretly received gifts from Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, who had been miraculously healed of his leprosy through Elisha's prayers. Gehazi was looking on, when Naaman offered rich

gifts to Elisha, which Elisha turned down. Gehazi went secretly to Naaman later and got the gifts without the knowledge of his master Elisha. But when he returned home, Elisha's wrath broke out into the above quoted words, which made him tremble in fear. The question, "Did not my heart go with you?" shook him terribly.

My beloved ones! In the life of St. Paul, as said in II Corinthians 11:28, a deep concern for all the churches came upon him everyday. But he definitively writes that he was able to go to every church, in spirit and see for himself the situation prevailing there, during such times. Both the verses quoted below explain this experience of St. Paul:

"For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (Col. 2:5)

"For indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, concerning him who has so done this deed" (I Cor. 5:3)

St. Paul visited the churches far away in spirit. Without going there in person, he examined their 'good order' and their steady faith; he was able to give them his counsel. This is an unparalleled experience!

I always had a constant worry regarding my parents, as I had to be away, on account of my job, leaving them alone in Cuddalore, where my father worked as a Teacher. One day I was praying for them with tears in the town of Guntur, nearly 400 miles away. The next moment the Holy Spirit took me to the house where they resided. My mother was ill on her bed; my father, tending to her needs and becoming weary, was reclining himself on an easy chair, dozing off. Nevertheless another spectacle delighted me; an angel was standing near my father, keeping watch over both of them. After seeing that sight, a great calm filled my heart. I got up from my knees peacefully at Guntur, 400 miles away.

A few days later, I received a letter from my father. Referring to the particular night, he mentioned in the letter that they had a strange feeling that I was present with them that night in their room.

Thousands write to me for prayer. I faithfully pray for them with tears and great compassion. They do receive God's touch and write to me letters testifying to this. However, one letter was different. Let me present before you that witness. Read on!

The testimony is from a doctor living in Jansi, in North India. He had an incurable lung disease. Whenever the attack came, he was almost thrown into the jaws of death. During one severe attack of the disease, Jesus appeared near him. The immediate fancy that struck him was: "If only I can lie down on His lap and weep, how consoling will it be? He will soothingly rub my chest with His hands and wipe away the disease from me." With this thought running in his mind, he looked up at Jesus, shedding tears profusely. Jesus, with a shining smile told him: "If you go to this place in Madras and meet my servant Dhinakaran there, he will pray for you, laying his hands on you; you will be healed." Jesus also showed my face and figure to him. How can we describe the concern of Jesus! After seeing this vision, the man was greatly wonder-struck; he received a new strength full of hope.

Travelling nearly 1000 miles, he came all the way to Madras. Fortunately for him, I was in town. On seeing me face to face, he was thrilled, because I was the same person he had been shown by Jesus in his vision. Without giving any background story, he just told me about his dreadful disease. I interceded for him with great compassion and tears, laying my hands on him and consoled him with the words, "The Lord will certainly heal you!" He went back and was healed marvellously. From there he wrote his testimony. His testimony was published in the "Jesus Calls" magazine.

My beloved people! The gift of the word of knowledge operates in the lives of the servants of God; it helps them to bring comfort to the broken-hearted people, to go to the places of need, in spirit through the power of the Holy Spirit. More astonishingly, the suffering people are shown by the Holy Spirit the figures of the servants and exhorted to go to them for comfort; this strengthens their faith and enables them to taste Christ's miracles in their lives.

Knowledge of the Will of God!

"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col.1:9)

As pointed out in this verse, it is God's desire that we should know His will and act according to it. Because, most of the times, our human will may not conform to God's will; it may be quite contradictory! The following Biblical verses clarify this

fact.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Is.55:8,9)

As recorded in II Corinthians 12:1-4, St. Paul, who had been suffering with 'a thorn in the flesh' was helped by the Holy Spirit to go straight to Heaven to submit his complaints to the merciful Lord Jesus. In the same way, the Holy Spirit, through the gift of word of knowledge helped St. Paul to know the will of God regarding the thorn in the flesh. Similarly, the gift of the word of knowledge is of great assistance to the servants of God.

When we are baffled by a situation in which we do not know what step we should take first and when we have to give our guidance regarding God's will to others, this gift takes us, in spirit, to Heaven and grants us the grace to see God face to face, and thereby to find God's will. Thus it brings about miracles.

Once, because of tribulations resulting from the ministry, I was sore depressed. To die is better than to live' was my haunting thought. One day the Holy Spirit filled me with His power immeasurably and took me to Heaven. There the Lord introduced me to apostle Peter and told him, "Peter, take him around and show the different places in Heaven." Peter took me around and what I saw everywhere, sent me into raptures. Peter, on the way, was narrating how he met Jesus in the world, what different experiences he had with Jesus, what his weaknesses were and how Jesus helped him in spite of his weaknesses. Finally he consoled me by posing this question: "Will not Jesus Christ who helped me to complete His ministry in the world, in spite of my weaknesses, help you too?" I was thrilled and encouraged!

At last, Peter brought me back to the throne of Jesus. Jesus asked me with a smile, "Would you like to stay here forever?" Who would not like to stay in Heaven, where there is no sorrow or pain or tears or tribulation? I was about to say, "Yes!" However the Holy Spirit thrust into my heart, at this crucial moment, a great burden for the great number of people in the world whose souls are perishing due to grievous, distressing problems in life, with no one to comfort them or care for them. That burden crushed me.

I could literally hear their wailings and mournings rising up to Heaven from the world. So, I replied, without any hesitation, "Lord! If I choose to remain here, who is there to pray for the suffering and mourning people? Who will show them Your compassion? So, let me go back." Accordingly, the Lord sent me back to this world.

My dear ones! At times God will take us to Heaven itself through this gift of the word of knowledge, to make known His will to us. As testified in Luke 9:31, He who sent Moses and Elijah to comfort Jesus, while He was troubled in spirit, looking forward to His death on the cross, will certainly take us also in spirit to Heaven. He will reveal His will to us; He will comfort us. He will send us back to earth with a fresh faith and a renewed strength to continue our ministry with greater zeal. Yes! The gift of the word of knowledge is an invaluable gift; a unique gift! There is nothing wrong, if we wait at the feet of our Lord, any number of years, to receive this wonderful gift.

Revelation of the End of the Journey!

We, mortals, are not going to live in this world for ever; we have to complete the race, one day. In the case of our Lord Jesus, too, there was an end to this earthly life. The Holy Bible describes His experience of His last days on earth:

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God"
(John 13:3)

When we read John 13:1,3, we become aware that He knew that His time to go back to God had come. The apostle, Peter also declared openly in II Peter 1:13,14, "Shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me." St. Paul also knew his time: "The time of my departure is at hand" (II Tim.4:6). Yes! What an exalted thing it is, to know when our ends would come, through this gift of the word of knowledge.

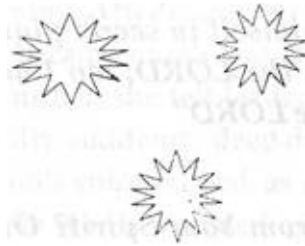
In Villupuram, in South India, there was a prophetess called Dhanam Swaminathan. Though not much educated, God had filled her with all the nine "Gifts"; and she was mightily used by Him. One day she told the members of her family and of the church, "The time for me to leave you all has come; I will die, in a few days. Many will weep for me. People from different places will come thronging and weep for me." She also mentioned the names of places from which the mourners would come and the very words with which they would weep. The end did come in a few days as she foretold; people came from

places, which she had foretold and wept for her bitterly in the predicted manner.

My dear ones! I can go on writing endlessly about such experiences. Both the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge are marvelous and precious gifts. They do not merely bring physical healing to the people; they enable us to 'walk' with God in our day-to-day life on this earth and, if necessary, to go to Heaven, in spirit, to hear from God whenever we need to see Him and talk to Him to get His counsel and will, in vital matters. Thus, they are supremely unparalleled gifts!

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God"
(Col. 3:1)

As the Holy Bible exhorts us, let us seek these rare gifts. Let us, through these gifts, receive the high honour of 'walking' with God!



6. The Gift of Discerning of Spirits!

Biblical Reference: I Corinthians 12:10

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1)

As directed by this verse, we have to test or sift various spirits that intervene in our day-to-day life and ministry. To do this, we require the matchless gift of discerning of spirits. Only if we have this gift within us, we will be able to identify in a given circumstance, what spirit (or spirits) surrounds us, quite clearly and precisely. This gift paves the way for our helping others too, by identifying the spirits working against them.

God is Spirit!

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24)

"Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, 'and not a God afar off?"

Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the LORD; 'do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD" (Jer.23:23,24)

David exclaims:

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there" (Ps. 139:7,8)

"For in Him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28)

All the Biblical verses, quoted above, explain the inscrutable truth that the mighty, invisible God who is in the form of Spirit is all pervasive. However, when the Holy Spirit descends into us, we too get intermingled with the invisible God, who is Spirit. The following verses substantiate this truth.

"But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (I Cor. 6:17)

"At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20)

A girl athlete, a specialist in the Marathon Race, a long race of 46 km used to practise running long distances every morning, not mindful of the shivering cold. Her husband, though not an athlete or a sportsman, used to run along with her as a pace-setter, out of his great love for her. Whenever she faltered, due to weariness, he would run close to her and whisper in her ears, "Honey, you can do it!" and make her pick up speed again.

Participating in a particular Olympic Marathon Race, she started running. After racing for about 16 miles, suddenly her legs became numb and she felt she could not move an inch further; she felt leaden footed. At that moment of perplexity, suddenly, deep down her heart, her beloved husband's voice echoed, as it were, "Honey, you can do it!" These words sounded again and again. That was all! A renewed vigour got hold of her and she continued her race with a fresh enthusiasm. She won the race ultimately and a gold medal, too,

in the bargain.

Yes! We, too, live all the twenty four hours of the day in God, who is Spirit (Acts 17:28). When the Holy Spirit descends on us, He makes us united with God, the Spirit into one entity; night and day, we feel this oneness through the gift of discerning of spirits.

Speaking on the significance of the radio, a scientist said: "We are always surrounded by innumerable sound waves, even in our own room. What the radio set does, when switched on, is that it draws a particular cluster of sound waves that surround us, converting them into sweet songs or melodies from musical instruments or human voices, for our enjoyment."

Quite so, when the gift of discerning of spirits is in action within us, it enables us to realize the holy presence of God, in a supernatural manner.

One of the several names given to God in the Bible is the 'Father of spirits' (Heb. 12:9 ; Num. 16:22 ; Job 12:10). "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).

"O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.

You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways" (Ps. 139:1-3)

This is how the Psalmist sings of the constant presence of God around him and His sharp and watchful eyes.

When the angel of the Lord met Hagar, the maid servant, who was wandering in the wilderness, forsaken by her husband and gave her words of comfort, she called the name of the Lord with great joy: "You-are-the-God-who-sees" (Gen.16:13).

Well, we will consider now a significant aspect of God, the "Father of the spirits." He weighs the spirits of men.

"All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits" (Prov.16:2)

Before probing into the details regarding this function, shall we ponder a while, over the nature of the spirit of man!

The Spirit of Man!

The following verses from the Bible speak excellently about the excellence of the spirit of man.

"The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the inner depths of his heart" (Prov. 20:27)

"For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?..." (I Cor.2:11)

"The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?" (Prov. 18:14)

Yes! The spirit of man is the matchless gift of God to mankind. It is a divine lamp which lights up and shows to man the true quality and the real standard of his life. It serves as a 'staff' to prop up our weaknesses, when we get depressed in our spiritual life. But when we indulge in acts displeasing to our Lord, it accuses us (Rom.2:15). Still, quite often, to sully the spirit of man, which is 'a lamp of the Lord', certain other spirits gain entry into the mind of man. Only to detect this, the Lord weighs the spirit of every man (Prov.16:2).

Don't we require a standard 'weight' to be put in the balance for weighing objects! That standard weight is God's holiness.

"...Be holy, for I am holy" (I Pet.1:16)

According to this loving command, we can easily imagine that if He chooses to weigh the spirit of any particular person, He does so, by placing His holiness on one side of the balance and the spirit of that man, on the other side. In the days of Daniel, the Babylonian king, Belshazzar, defiled the holy vessels taken from the house of God, by pouring wine and drinking it from them, and ultimately lost his consciousness; he had spoken profane words against the Holy of Holies. God chided him sternly:

"...You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting" (Dan.5:27)

And so, when God weighs the spirit of any man against His holiness, He can easily detect how wanting the spirit of that particular man is! The Lord gives this unique gift of discerning of spirits out of His boundless mercy to man, who is, after all a product of clay, so that he may cleanse his own blemishes and those of others.

Now, let us examine a few of the many spirits, which defile the spirit of man, mentioned in the Bible.

1. Hasty spirit! (Prov. 29:20 ; Is.28:16)

Jesus, the Son of God, told his disciple Peter, "*...when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished...*" (John 21:18)

When Jesus explained to His disciples the sufferings He would have to undergo, Peter acted agitatedly and dared to rebuke his Master, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" (Matt. 16:22). Again on seeing his Master walking on the waves of the sea, it was only he, who hastily said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water" (Matt. 14:28). When 'a detachment of troops and officers' came to arrest Jesus, it was Peter, again, who acted hastily. He drew a sword and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off 'his right ear' (John 18:10). Yet Jesus, the very embodiment of love, who knew pretty well the hasty spirit in him, handled him with great love and tenderness. Thrice did Peter deny his Master! Thrice did Jesus ask Peter tenderly, "Do you love Me?" and made his heart melt with love for Him (John 21:15-17).

I know a servant of God, who lived in a certain town, Each time I visited that town, he would have joined a new church or would be engaged in a new kind of ministry. When I asked him about these frequent changes, his invariable answer was: "The Lord showed me this path" or "The Lord guided me to do so." When he, who had the hasty spirit in him, completed his race of life, his friends, with deep grief, commented, "He was engaged in a barren and empty ministry, failing to bring even a single soul to the cross."

2. Spirit of harlotry! (Hos.4:12; 5:4,5)

This spirit captures easily those who are carnal minded or those who have not been washed by the blood of Jesus. Our merciful Lord Jesus has defined lustful thoughts as follows:

"But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart"

(Matt.5:28)

The Bible has made it amply clear that an adulterous unreformed man destroys both his own body and soul (I Cor. 6:18 ; Prov. 6:32).

Likewise, in our spiritual life too, serving the invisible Lord on the one hand and running after the obsessions of this world on the other, are tantamount to harlotry. The following Biblical verse, therefore, warns us:

"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"

(James 4:4)

Once, a pastor narrated this amusing story in a church: A great revival swept through a particular church. So they searched for a new, expansive place for worship. Finally they were able to purchase a place near their church; it had been a bar (wine shop) earlier. They thoroughly overhauled the place, white washed it and decorated it so that it could become a fitting place for worship.

On a particular Sunday, the pastor led his congregation in a procession, from the old church to the new one, singing Hymns all the way. After completing the special dedication service outside, the pastor stepped into the new church. The previous owner of the place had removed everything, 'lock, stock and barrel' from the place; but he had forgotten to take away his very well trained parrot with its cage!

When the pastor stepped in, the 'learned' parrot, taking a close look at him, said, "Oh, the new owner of the shop has come!" Next entered the organist, the choir master with his organ; the parrot said, "Well, well, the new musician has come!" Then the whole congregation came in, one by one, and took their seats. When all of them were settled, the parrot screeched aloud: "Oh, but all these are the old, regular customers! No change at all!"

Yes! What do we understand from- this anecdote? There are people who, while participating in the revival meetings in the church on one hand with great enthusiasm, regale themselves by drinking secretly, in liquor shops. This is exactly what the Bible terms as the spirit of harlotry.

3. Spirit of pride! (Hos.7:10)

A large gathering of people attended a music concert given by a very famous orchestra in a particular city in the U.K. once. At that time, the conductor of the orchestra, swelling with pride proclaimed arrogantly without a second thought: "Such a huge crowd was never drawn by Jesus Christ Himself!" You know what befell on the group later? Very shortly afterwards, he was murdered. The musical team was split; while some became obscure, others met an untimely death.

Yes! The spirit of pride is abominable in the sight of God.

4. Spirit of vengeance! (Luke 9:51-55)

When the people of a particular village in Samaria, declined to receive their Master, the disciples of Jesus grew furious. They wanted to wreak vengeance on them; they wanted to bring down fire from Heaven, as Elijah did, to burn down the whole village. But Jesus rebuked them saying, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of" (Luke 9:55).

A certain servant of the Lord, used mightily by Him, was hailed by people all over the world; yet he had a minor flaw in his life. He would never spare any one who criticized him and those who belonged to churches, which he disliked. He would take vengeance on them, by making mean uncomplimentary remarks on them publicly, in the course of his sermons. What was the result? Another man exposed to the whole world, his committing the same vices in his private life, which he was exaggeratedly pointing out in public with great pleasure, in the lives of others. Alas! He lost his ministry itself, undergoing a great dishonour.

5. Spirit of faith! (II Cor.4:13; Num.13:30; 14:24)

The Lord had given the Israelites the promise that He would lead them into Canaan, the land of milk and honey. However, before entering it, the men who had returned from spying it, gave fearsome reports which terrified the Israelites and made their hearts "melt like wax". Their report was: "All the people whom we saw in it are giants!" But the hero Caleb was so brave that he was commended by God Himself as one who had 'a different spirit'. Yes! Without a trace of fear, *"...Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it' "* (Num. 13:30)

There was the 'spirit of faith' in him. The word of God, 'you stand by faith' (Rom. 11:20) clearly indicates that only those who have this 'spirit of faith' in them can stand till the end steadfastly, in faith. When we lose this 'spirit of faith' in our spiritual life, depression easily overtakes us; we become dejected.

Once I happened to read about the famous researcher Christopher Columbus, who discovered the South American countries. He was going round the world several times to discover new lands. During his last trip of adventure, he was marooned in an island for more than a year. After strenuous efforts, he hoisted the flag of his country there, thereby bringing the island under the rule of his country and then returned home.

What Columbus anticipated in his own country was a wry grand welcome. He expected that his countrymen would hail him as 'a super hero, who had brought many countries under their subjection.' He expected a royal welcome, too, from his king. With these dreams he landed on the shores of his country in his boat. But, to his dismay, nothing tumultuous happened. As he had started his adventure several months earlier, people had 'clean' forgotten him and his lofty ideals. Even the king gave him a lukewarm welcome. Alas! His heart was shattered. The brave adventurer who had braved the raging waves of the ocean in a small boat, could not endure the ungenerous attitude of his people and his king. Unable to withstand the shock, he died quite soon of a broken heart.

6. Broken Spirit! (Prov. 15:13; 17:22; 1.8:14)

Yes! A broken spirit within us can break our physique too. Under the stress, our body droops and withers away.

I am reminded of an anecdote from the life story of the world renowned scientist, Sir Isaac Newton. Through his ceaseless researches, he discovered many new Laws of Nature. Yet, he was a bit careless about publishing them at once. Nearly ten years afterwards only did he compile and publish them as a book. No sooner did he publish his book, than many scientists, who had already been envious of him pointed out that many principles mentioned in his book had already been published in their books and accused him of 'Plagiarism'. The baseless accusations wounded his heart so severely that he never recovered from the depression which ultimately shortened his life.

7. Spirit of jealousy! (Suspicion)

(Num. 5:14; Prov. 6:34)

The suspicion that takes hold of a husband regarding the character of his wife, is defined as 'the spirit of jealousy' in the Bible. Once this spirit of jealousy grips a husband or a wife, their family life will become a hell.

A young man who married a gracefully beautiful girl lived with her joyously for a few days. His wife was of a sociable nature and was able to mix freely with all kinds of people. As days passed on, the evil spirit of jealousy crept into his mind; he began to eye her with ever increasing suspicion. This suspicion turned into violence and he began to thrash her ruthlessly for no reason at all; her body, unable to bear the violence, was bruised all over and broken. Her unmitigated and blameless love for him only kept them together. Though the husband realised his mistake, after a long time, by then she had been overtaken by an incurable disease and had become a mere shadow of her original self, 'a walking corpse' and a burden to herself.

The husband spent his days in tears, remorse and sorrow.

8. Spirit of slumber! (Is. 29:10 ; Rom. 11:8)

Visualise the three beloved disciples of Jesus, the Son of God - Peter, John and James in the Garden of Gethsemane! On the one side the Son of God, battling with the agony of shame, spiteful abuse and physical suffering that awaited Him on the cross, 'fell on His face' (Matt. 26:39) to the ground, deeply sorrowful.

"Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"

(Luke 22:43,44)

But on the other side His disciples were filled with the 'spirit of deep sleep', as indicated by the following Biblical verse:

"When He (Jesus) rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow"

(Luke 22:45)

Alas! Countless are the people who have lost both worldly and spiritual blessings, as they are enslaved by this spirit of slumber.

Once the members of a family were travelling in a train from one town to another, by night; they were carrying with them a box containing costly jewels. As they had to be in the train, the whole night, the safety of that box had to be assured. The head of the family, an old man said, "I will be awake, the whole night. I'll keep the box near me, holding on to it firmly. I'll not sleep; all of you can have a sound sleep." Accordingly he did not sleep the whole night until 5 a.m. At about 5 a.m., involuntarily, he took a wink of sleep and woke up again, after a few minutes. When he opened his eyes, the box had vanished, as if by magic. He lamented bitterly: "Alas! I had closed my eyes only for a minute; and all my jewels have been snatched away in that short span of time!"

My beloved ones! The valuable gift of God to mankind, the 'spirit of man' is, sometimes, tainted by many spirits of this kind. The concerned people are not aware of it. But when the precious gift of discerning of spirits is given to a servant of God, through the Holy Spirit, it empowers him to detect the working of these different kinds of spirits lurking in people, who come to him for prayers. Moreover this gift helps him to study the hearts of the people correctly, counsel them according to their spiritual standard and obtain for them relief

for their problems, from the Lord.

Once, a gifted servant of God had to go to another town on account of his official duty and he stayed in a friend's house there. One day that friend told him, "Many people want to meet you in person and seek your prayers. Could you meet them tomorrow evening?" The servant of God consented to his request.

Next evening came! Quite a lot of people thronged there. So the servant of God decided to share the word of God with them before praying for them individually. When he started preaching, he saw an apparently cultured lady, sitting straight opposite to him; but that lady, instead of gazing at the preacher, was indifferently looking somewhere else and looking askantly at him. Her attitude irritated the servant of God and he thought within himself: "This lady is not interested in listening to God's word I utter; she is looking at some other place. Why did she, who is not inclined to hear comforting valuable words about God, come here at all?"

However after the sermon, his friend, introducing every one to him, asked him to pray for their specific needs. When the turn of the lady, in question, came, the friend said, "Brother, this lady has lost her vision in her right eye; She can use only the corner of her left eye, for seeing anything. With a kind of a squint only she can see. Please pray for the restoration of her vision." The servant of God was shocked. He was a little upset for having mistaken her defect for an indifferent attitude. He asked forgiveness from God inwardly.

Don't we read that in the Biblical times, a similar incident happened in the case of Eli, the priest! One day as Eli was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the Lord (I Sam. 1:9), a miserable woman called Hannah, who had no child, entered and 'prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish.' She was praying in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore 'Eli thought she was drunk' (I Sam. 1:13). We can read his question based on his misunderstanding and her reply in the following Biblical verses:

"So Eli said to her, 'How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!'

And Hannah answered and said, 'No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD" (I Sam. 1:14,15)

My dear ones, if we don't have the gift of discerning of spirits, we are prone to jump to wrong conclusions, misjudging their outward gestures and appearances and offend them by words or deeds. But if we have it, we will identify the spirit

which dominates their lives and help them accordingly.

Evil Spirits!

Many years ago, a man who did not believe in the Biblical records, asked the world renowned preacher Dr. Billy Graham this question: "Sir, do you believe in the story of Jonah?" Pat came the reply from Dr. Billy Graham, without any hesitation: "Yes! Because my beloved Saviour Jesus Christ Himself has made mention of Jonah's history clearly and specifically" (Matt. 12:39-41).

Likewise, the same kind of question regarding the reality of the devil or evil spirits, is sometimes put to us by many, when we preach, acknowledging the presence of evil spirits.

We should give them the same answer given by Dr. Billy Graham. Yes! When the Lord walked on the earth, He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons (Mark 1:39). Now, let us attempt to categorize these wicked spirits.

There are many references in the Bible to a figure, who is the enemy of mankind, whose name is given as 'Satan'. We see his name both in the Old and New Testaments. It has been recorded, with reference to Satan, in Job, which is the oldest book in the Bible, according to Biblical scholars.

"Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?'" (Job 1:8)

In the New Testament we see references to his name in Matthew 4:10 ; Luke 13:16 ; John 13:27 ;
I Thessalonians 2:18 ; 1 Corinthians 5:5 ; 7:5 ;
II Corinthians 2:11 ; 11:14 and Revelation 2:13,24. He has been given many other nomenclatures in the Bible, viz:

Prince of the power of the air (Eph.2:2)

Spirit of wickedness (Eph. 6:12)

The ruler of this world (John 14:30)

The god of this age (II Cor. 4:4)

The wicked one (I John 5:19)

The tempter (Matt. 4:3 ; I Thess. 3:5)

Deceiving spirit (I Tim. 4:1)

Devil, Demon (Matt. 4:5 ; Mark 1:39 ; Luke 4:2)

The accuser (Rev. 12:10)

A liar, The father of lies, Murderer (John 8:44)

The thief (John 10:10)

All these names themselves reveal that his work is directed towards whatever is evil and not good.

1. Satan and his cohorts!

The Biblical scholars, unanimously, put forward the view that Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-17 describe Satan's appearance and his 'fall'.

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!" (Is.14:12)

"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones" (Ezek. 28:14)

"...therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones" (Ezek. 28:16)

These verses reveal that Satan was originally one of the archangels, the 'cherub' who were chosen by God to be with Him in the light of the fiery stones; they also explain how he lost that exalted position. The only reason for his 'fall' was his 'pride'. This is illustrated by the following Biblical verse:

"Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil" (I Tim. 3:6)

When the 'cherub' was cast away, the other angels who rebelled against God, were also cast away from Heaven. The Bible informs us dearly that they are 'reserved in everlasting chains' until the Day of Judgment:

"...God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment" (II Pet. 2:4)

"And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6)

spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12)

the prince of the power of the air..." (Eph. 2:2)

the verses quoted above, point out that these fallen spirits are kept somewhere in the heavenly places.

I know a servant of God, endowed with the spiritual "Gifts" immeasurably. As mentioned in II Corinthians 12:1-4, the Lord would take him, in spirit, to Heaven and to His Holy presence and show him the glories of that place. He would reveal the hidden secrets in the Scripture and the events that will overtake this world in the future. He would reply to his intercessory prayers; He would permit him to 'walk' with Him, in Spirit (Gen. 5:24).

Once, taking him to Heaven and conversing with him through the Holy Spirit, He called a chosen angel and commanded him: "Take him back to the earth and on the way, show him the kingdom of Satan too." So the servant of God was taken to that part in Spirit. The sight that met his eyes there was an unforgettable one! That place also looked almost like Heaven. There was a throne similar to the throne of God in Heaven; on that was seen a beautiful and majestic figure; several angels were standing around the throne. Those spirits were not able to see this servant of God and the escorting angel. Probably they were enveloped by the Lord's shadow. How can we expound the power of the Almighty God as explained in the following verse:

"...but the LORD hid them" (Jer. 36:26 ; Is. 49:2; 51:16)

The servant of God realised that day, how true this word is! Usually, when we think of Satan or Devil, we imagine that his appearance would be a fearful and uncouth one. But the Bible describes him as one 'full of wisdom and perfect in beauty' (Ezek. 28:12). And so, the servant of God, too, was taken by surprise at his regal appearance. When he closely overheard what Satan was discussing with his angels, he could make out that they were planning how to draw all kingdoms in the world and all people in them towards them by corrupting their minds.

The Bible explains this in the following verses:

"Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?'" (Is. 14:16,17)

The angel of God and the servant of God continued their journey through Satan's kingdom. He saw many fallen spirits flitting about on various kinds of errands - some 'lying spirits' (I Kin. 22:23), set apart to deceive people by making them believe in falsehood; some 'deceiving spirits', given the work of making

people mistake the messengers of the devil for the messengers of God (I Tim. 4:1; II Cor. 11:14,15); some spirits assigned the task of getting people involved in witchcraft and sorcery (II Kin. 9:22 ; II Chr. 33:6); and some other spirits given the responsibility of causing various types of diseases and physical infirmities (Luke 13:11; Acts 10:38) on the bodies of the people and make them suffer.

In another part of the abode of Satan, he saw spirits of people who died unrepentantly. There was only a haze of dim light, resembling the twilight, coupled with partial darkness in both places, the area where Satan sat on his throne and the area in which the unredeemed spirits of men were. Truly Satan and his angels are bound in eternal chains of darkness (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Our Lord Jesus Himself has described the torment and agony in the place where the unsaved spirits of men lay, as follows:

"But the sons of the kingdom will he cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"
(Matt. 8:12 ; 25:30)

All these spirits, found in clusters, were lamenting their irrepressible grief over their pathetic situation in this place of darkness; they had come to this place due to their refusal to accept Jesus as their Saviour, despite many opportunities provided by evangelical messages regarding Christ and the salvation He offers. The heart of the servant of God was pierced by the lamenting voices of millions of spirits crying: "Alas! I had lost my chance for salvation."

Another mode of torturing these spirits, yet further, was to allow them to have a peep, once in a while, at Heaven filled with overflowing joy and music. The unsaved spirits shrieked out their grief over the lost opportunity; their anguishing cry pierced through the heart of the servant of God like a darting arrow (Luke 16:23).

In another part of the abode of Satan there was a sea of liquid fire, with its furious fiery waves. The servant of God was shocked to see many human spirits, being tossed about and tormented in the sea of fire. The sea of fire was bordered not with white sandy shores of seas in the world, but with mountainous rocks. Some tormented spirits, thrown over these

rocks by the seething fiery waves, tried to scramble up the mountainous rocks, with a false hope of escape; but the waves of fire, apparently alive, put out their tongues of fire, in the fashion of a serpent, protruding its tongue and dragged them down, back into the fiery sea. Alas! The wild cries of the spirits are indescribable (Luke 16:24).

It is indeed sad that for some great people in lofty positions in this world and intellectuals, who are admired by all, it becomes very difficult to receive the freely available salvation, offered by Jesus Christ who died on the cross for us. This is what our gracious Lord Jesus meant, when he exclaimed, *"...how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!*

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:24,25)

Again, when the spirits of people who had ruined themselves, enter Satan's kingdom, the evil spirits there mock at them and make fun of them. Words cannot describe the humiliation they were subjected to!

After showing all these breath-taking sights and before leaving the place for the world, the angel of God told the servant of God, "Look at the fun now!" He whispered, "Jesus! Jesus!" very, very softly. That was all! All the demons and evil spirits became alert and were startled; they stood spellbound! Sharpening their ears, they screamed in unison, "Has He come? Has He come? Has He come here to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8:29)

Yes! The name of Jesus causes the spirits to tremble in fear. That is why our merciful Lord Jesus, before being taken up to Heaven gave this final word of blessing to those who believe in Him and follow His teachings.

In My name they will cast out demons..."
(Mark 16:17)

My dear ones! As warned by Ephesians 6:12, we have to wrestle 'against spiritual hosts of wickedness' in high places. Nevertheless, in the name of Jesus we will certainly emerge victorious over these evil spirits (Rom.8:37; I Cor. 15:57; Phil. 2:10,11).

2. Satan's ire! (Wrath)

What is the reason for the fury of Satan and his cohorts, against humanity? After the devil and his messengers had lost

their original splendour, God created man.

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them"
1:27) (Gen.

He created them in His own image and in righteousness and true holiness and perfect knowledge (Eph. 4:24 ; Col. 3:10). Satan became furious and jealous, because the eminence, the wisdom and beauty he had lost, were given to the newly created man. That is why he is 'prowling about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour' (I Pet. 5:8).

In a Beauty Contest held in one of the world capitals, a young woman from a particular country participated and won the 'Miss World' title. Her home country gave her a rousing welcome. But, after a short time, she vanished mysteriously. The police could not trace her, in spite of their massive efforts. Finally, after several months, secret reports reached the police that she was in a particular hotel in an American city. The police rushed to the hotel and found her. But, alas! Her facial appearance had turned horribly crude; there were marks of injury and scars all over her body, caused by burns.

A young man, found with her, was arrested. He gave the following confessional statement. The young man had become furiously envious of the girl's beauty which had catapulted her to instant fame and glory. He planned to devastate her beauty, out of his malice for sadistic pleasure. Capturing her heart with his deceiving honey-tongued words, he managed to take her to an alien country, the U.S.A. There, in that hotel, he put his villainous plan into action. He tortured her, inch by inch, by thrusting on her face smoking cigarette butts and making her beautiful face look ugly with scars. Thus he made scars all over her body and destroyed her beauty entirely.

Exactly so, the devil who had lost his eminence, became wildly envious of man, created in the image of God and resolved to destroy the glory of man. The terribly infuriated devil is 'prowling about', seeking to ruin man. Our gracious Lord Jesus has described the devil, the enemy of man, thus:

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy..." (John 10:10)

"...He was a murderer from the beginning..."
(John 8:44)

3. Satan's conspiracy!

Now let us consider the various means, by which Satan has plotted to enter into man and ruin him.

a) Fear!

First. Satan creates fear in the hearts of those people who have not committed themselves to Jesus Christ, According to the Bible,

"...fear involves torment..." (I John 4:18)

The experience of those in the grip of fear is illustrated in the following Scriptural verses:

"Lest they tear me like a lion, rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver" (Ps. 7:2)

"For the enemy has persecuted my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me dwell in darkness, like those who have long been dead" (Ps. 143:3)

Yes! The wicked devil enslaves people, subjugating them with 'fear of death', all their lifetime (Heb. 2:15).

A young man in a good position in an office was suddenly afflicted by an unknown fear. Haunted by this constant fear, he would run away from his seat in his office; sometimes he would jump out of moving vehicles, screaming, "Someone is chasing me!" This fear tormented him day and night. One day he came to attend a church service. After the service, while the pastor and a servant of God were discussing certain matters, the young man started running, screaming, "My God, those devils have come here, too!" Fortunately, some young men caught hold of him and held him tightly in their iron grip. The pastor began to pray for him earnestly.

At this juncture, the gift of discerning of spirits descended on the servant of God, standing nearby. The Lord opened his spiritual eyes; he saw behind the young man a horrible many-headed figure raging against that poor man. He saw a magician, too, in a far away place, with a similar looking puppet of clay and invoking its attention towards him with his sorcery. He was moved with compassion for the young man and the power of the Holy Spirit came upon him. He rebuked that ferocious evil fonn. That was all!

"...Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7)

According to this verse, the wicked spirit fled from that place towards the magician and broke down all the vessels and other paraphernalia, with which he was performing sorcery. The magician, shocked by what happened, also fled away.

The Holy Spirit showed all these scenes to the servant of God in a fleeting second. When he opened his eyes after prayer, the young man was completely delivered. His face had become calm. Full of smiles in his face, he said, "That figure has disappeared. Praise be to Jesus!"

Yes! The devil creates a kind of fear in the hearts of people and then, attempts to enter into their lives.

b) Pride!

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18)

True to this Biblical verse, it was 'pride' which was the root cause of the 'fall' of Satan, the cherub, who was walking with God in Heaven, into condemnation (1 Tim. 3:6). So, naturally, the method he follows to lead the people towards destruction is to make them 'puffed up with pride' and fill them with haughty arrogance.

A pastor, while giving me his counsels, emphasised one vital point. It was that however vastly my ministry expands, I should give all the glory to God alone. He also gave me in illustration.

In a certain country, there was a man of God used mightily by God. Led by God he went to another country to preach the word of God; vast multitudes of people thronged to listen to his sermons and to get healed of their physical sufferings. One night he brought out his subconscious mind, by blabbering in his sleep. When he saw the milling crowd, he lost his balance and openly remarked in a fit of ecstasy: "Today the whole world is under my feet!"

He did not show, even later, any feeling of remorse, for that vain boasting. Alas! Very soon, he became very ill and got confined to a wheel chair; and his ministry too was lost for ever. This is a perfect instance of how the wicked devil attempts to pull down people by demolishing them with his weapon, 'pride'.

c) Greed for money!

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10)

As this verse indicates, greed for money is another powerful

tool employed by Satan.

Consider the case of Judas! According to Luke 9:1, he was loved by Jesus, and had received from Him the authority and power to cast out devils and to heal the sick. Jesus had entrusted with him all the offerings of money given by the people (John 12:6); He had so much trust in him. But according to John 13:2, the wicked devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray him. How was the devil able to enter into the heart of Judas? Was it not through the greed for money? As we read in Matthew 26:15, he went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if deliver Him to you?" Did he not bargain the precious life of Jesus for 'thirty pieces of silver'?

A diamond merchant, living a life of darkness was miraculously transformed into a true follower of Christ, along with his family members. He started attending church service on Sundays, devoting the entire day to spiritual activities, unlike the earlier times, when he used to keep his shop open.

Days rolled on. His former friends slowly approached him, one after another, and started chiding him: "Only on Sundays, very rich men come to diamond shops for transactions; on that day, you keep your shop closed; how silly!" Through those sugar-coated enticing words of his friends, the devil put it into the heart of that merchant, greed for money. From that time onwards, the merchant began to transact business even on Sundays skipping church services.

One day, one man brought a large sized diamond and offered it for a huge amount of money. The merchant was alone in his shop, as the other members of the family had gone to church. The merchant opened his locker and took out all the money from it and purchased that covetable diamond. That man after putting all the money into his box, suddenly took out a hidden revolver and poking it at the merchant, threatened him not to move or shout. Thus

he snatched the huge diamond which he had just then sold and fled away. Alas! In a fleeting moment, the merchant had lost all his riches and had become a pauper. For many years, he kept mourning the loss and lamenting that he had lost all his money as he had sought riches and rejected Jesus Christ. His life ended pathetically.

d) Physical infirmity!

When we read the history of the upright man, Job, we come to know that he was steadfast in his faith even , amidst all the

tribulations and loss. When he still refused to curse God, what did Satan ask God?

"... Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" (Job 2:4,5)

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head (Job 2:7). In spite of his agonizing pain, Job did not betray God although even his wife berated him, saying, "Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9). In the same way, the wicked devil afflicts us with dreadful diseases to make us betray God and reject Jesus Christ.

Once when a servant of God in India went to another country, a friend of his took him to pray for another man of God in that country. It was a heart-rending sight that met his eyes there. The man of God and his wife were once occupying very high positions in the secular world. But when Jesus entered their hearts, they were immersed in divine peace. They resigned their jobs, as they considered it their duty to share this divine peace with people all over the world. They started a full-time ministry, proclaiming the message of grace about the salvation offered by Jesus Christ. Caught by the spirit of envy, his infuriated relatives, resorted to witchcraft and directed evil powers against him.

As the first sign of calamity, a huge Jack tree in front of their house, fell on its roots, all of a sudden, completely withered. Next came a vicious harsh physical affliction; the legs of the man of God, affected by a severe disease, had rotten. When the servant of God from India, who went to pray for him, entered the house, he was greeted by a stinking smell. The man of God, himself a doctor, told the servant of God, "Sir, this is not a disease, but a weakness caused by the wicked devil!" Though perplexed at first, the servant of God anointed him with oil, according to James 5:14,15 and prayed for him earnestly.

Time passed on. Next year when the servant of God went to the same city, a dynamic and vibrant person, full of life came near and asked him, "Sir, do you recognize me?" When the servant of God was a little puzzled, unable to identify him, that man cheerfully said, "Sir, I am the person whose legs were in a rotten condition last year; you prayed for me, anointing me with oil. Our Lord Jesus Christ released me from the clutches of the devil." Oh, what a glorious Jesus we have! Yes! He honoured the faith of that dear couple, who sacrificed

everything for His Gospel.

In this way, Satan tries to draw us away from the holy presence of God by afflicting our hearts and bodies with various kinds of temptations and diseases. If people are not steadfast in their faith, a little carelessly, then, he is emboldened to enter into their hearts and capture them completely. Don't we read how Satan entered into Judas in John 13:27?

"Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly'"

How pathetic his end, as portrayed in Acts 1:16-18, was! He fell headlong and committed suicide.

Our gracious Lord Jesus has warned us, as reported in Matthew 12:43-45, that if there is no holiness in our heart, there is a likelihood of many unclean spirits being attracted towards, and finally occupying it. So let us keep in our mind, the tragic end of Judas.

In the year 1974, I had the privilege of visiting Jerusalem in Israel. The guide who took me around, pointed out a spot referred to, in Matthew 27:5, and commented that Judas hanged himself somewhere there. Immediately my heart staggered a little. I prayed with tears, "O my Lord, let me not at any time get into such a pathetic situation; save me Lord from betraying You under any circumstance."

Modus Operandi of the Gift of Discerning of Spirits!

1. Makes the devils tremble!

In His earthly life, our gracious Lord Jesus was filled with a mighty power over the demons, and so wherever demon-possessed people encountered Jesus, the demons trembled at His very sight. They spontaneously cried out aloud, "You are the Christ, the Son of God! The Holy One of God" (Luke 4:34,41;

Mark 5:7). Consider the life of St. Paul who was endowed with the same power. When he went to minister in the city of Philippi, 'a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination cried out, on seeing Paul and his fellow-workers, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). We also read about Paul's gift:

"...even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his (Paul's) body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them"
(Acts 19:12)

Again, Acts 19:15 tells us that a wicked spirit gave this testimony about Paul:

"...Jesus I know, and Paul I know..."

Yes! When a servant of God has this invaluable gift in his life, the devil can recognize him easily and trembles on seeing him.

In a certain town in India by name Sambalpur, a woman arranged to direct witchcraft towards her relatives living in another city. From that day, during the time of twilight in the evening, four dark figures would enter the house, smash all articles there and torture them, not allowing them to sleep; the magicians failed in their effort to drive them away. A band of Christian men ventured to chase away those demons through their prayers. When they commenced their devotions by singing devotional songs about Christ, those demons appeared and sat down with them and enjoyed the songs. They ran away in great fear leaving their musical instruments on seeing those demons. The family experienced a limitless torment.

One day a small boy of that family, boldly shouted at those figures, "Why do you torture us this way? What do you expect us to do, if you have to leave this place?" One of those dark figures mentioned the name of a particular servant of God

living in Madras and said if he commands us to go, we will run away from this place immediately." Some members of that family came to the servant of God with that little boy, after making enquiries about him in various places and after experiencing great difficulty; they poured out their distress to him. He was deeply moved with compassion, when he listened to their painful story.

He pleaded with God for them with tears and commanded the wicked demons to get out of the house, at that very moment. As he commanded the spirits from Madras, one thousand miles away from the other village, the four dark figures stood up! They vanished saying, "That servant of God has commanded us to leave, in the name of Jesus. We are quitting. We will never come back."

Satan and his demons know clearly the identity of the men of God, who have the gift of discerning of spirits. They will tremble on seeing such men of God and on hearing their words, because our merciful Lord Jesus has positively asserted, "Those things he says will come to pass" (Mark 11:23).

2. Discerns the involvement of the devils!

Just before crucifixion, Jesus addressed the cruel people who had come to arrest him, saying,

'When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness'
(Luke 22:53)

The gift of discerning of spirits distinguishes physical ailments from afflictions created by the devil. If this gift is in us, it will be very much helpful when people come to us for prayers for their diseases and mental disorders.

Once a woman with a psychic (mental) disease was taken to a Prayer House in a certain town, for special prayers. Wrongly concluding that she had been afflicted by the devil, the well meaning workers there employed various physical methods to drive away the spirit. Alas! The girl unable to bear the physical torture ultimately succumbed to it and died.

Mental patients also will appear to be exactly like demon-possessed ones.

Once a doctor gave this explanation about mental disease. Elasticity is the distinguishing quality of rubber. But there is a limit to it; if it is stretched beyond a certain limit, it may snap or completely lose its power of regaining the original state.

Similar is the state of our mind. Many kinds of sorrows and burdens 'stretch' our mind, by putting pressure on it. The following verses explain it lucidly.

"Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression..."

(Prov. 12:25)

"...but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken"

(Prov. 15:13)

"...a broken spirit dries the bones" (Prov.17:22)

"The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?" (Prov. 18:14)

That is why, the Bible exhorts us to cast all our burden on the Lord and leave all our cares and vexations with Jesus Christ our Lord (Ps. 55:22 ;

I Pet.5:7). When we fail to cast our burden on the Lord, alas, our mind loses its power to sustain any stress.

The oppressed and depressed mind becomes deceased; such people appear, externally, almost like demon- possessed people. These psychic patients lament in despair, having lost their self-awareness. But this gift, very clearly and specifically shows us the distinction between mental disease and devil-oriented disease.

3. Reveals the background of the devils!

In Mark 5:1-20, we come across a man who was possessed by more than two thousand unclean spirits, Jesus became compassionate towards him and asked him, "What is your name?" The unclean spirits that were in the man answered, "My name is Legion; for we are many" (Mark 5:9). When Jesus rebuked them, they went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the swine ran violently down into the sea and drowned in the sea (Mark 5:13).

Once, a servant of the Lord from India had been to the United States of America. One day he attended the morning worship in a church service there. After the service, a demon-possessed woman was brought in chains to him. They had to bind her with chains as a precautionary measure, as the suicidal spirit in her was forever prompting her to jump down from the fourth floor, where she lived.

The servant of the Lord was moved with compassion, on seeing her. He just told her, "My dear sister, sit down"; she

obediently did so. This amazed all the people there, as she had never obeyed anybody's command till then. He discerned with his spiritual eyes many demons, which possessed her. Without any hesitation whatsoever, he laid his hands on her head and prayed, interceding for her, "Lord, kindly set her free." Instantly, she was released from the grip of the demons.

Yes! This gift opens our spiritual eyes, enabling us to discern instantly how many demons possess a person. When the servants of God, endowed with this valuable gift rebuke them, in the name of Jesus, they merely flee, even if their number is legion.

4. Our attitude during the operation of this gift!

As we have seen already, this gift enables us to discern, in Spirit, the number and nature of the powers of darkness, lurking in the lives of those for whom we intercede, exactly as our Lord Jesus felt it, in His Spirit (Luke 22:53).

The next important thing we should be careful about is our attitude towards the afflicted. We must bear in mind that our enemy is just the devil, and not the people afflicted by him. Our wrath should be directed towards the devil and not the people, languishing in the grip of the devil.

Was not the heart of Jesus filled with love and compassion, when the man possessed by about two thousand unclean spirits came running to him? Was not compassion the source of His tenderness with which he asked, "Son, what is your name?"

Next, before commanding the demons to leave a person, we should examine deep down in our hearts, for a minute, whether our life is unblemished and without any sin. Jesus has Himself testified His holiness, on seeing the approaching devil:

"...the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me" (John 14:30)

Even if we have an iota of doubt regarding our purity in the depth of our hearts, we should immediately subjugate our life to the blood of Christ. As it is written in Exodus 12:22,23, if the holy blood is sprinkled on our souls, no devil can break those barriers and touch us, as the Lord's favour will surround us as with a shield (Ps. 5:12). The same truth is explained in I Corinthians 5:7 and Hebrews 12:24. To keep our life holy, we should, as a customary practice, set apart a particular day for

Tasting and praying' to cleanse the shortcomings staining our life (Mark 9:29 ; II Cor. 11:27).

Apart from this checking of our purity, we should also pray silently within our mind, that the Holy Spirit should grant in us a new authority and a fresh anointing. The following verses illustrate the power of the Holy Spirit:

"Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, who will bring them down to the earth with His hand" (Is. 28:2)

"...when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him" (Is. 59:19)

Accordingly, the Spirit of the Lord will come down and descend into us with a new power; our words will reflect a new authority.

Just like our Lord Jesus, we too can cast out any number of demons with the fresh divine authority that proceeds from us. The possessed people also will be delivered.

The Spirit of the Antichrist!

"By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world"
(I John 4:2,3)

The two verses quoted above define, aptly, the spirit of the Antichrist. This spirit tempts people to deny not only Jesus Christ, who has come in the flesh from God, but also God the Father who sent Him to this earth (I John 2:22,23).

Many people receive miraculous physical healing and divine manifestations in the "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings, when we pray for the afflicted people after the Gospel message. Yet, when called upon to give their witness on the stage, they do not acknowledge, "It is Jesus who healed me." They merely say, "Prayer healed me" or "God healed me" without pronouncing the name of Jesus.

This is the work of the spirit of the Antichrist, which is walking all over the world, even now, according to I John 2:18 and preventing people from pronouncing and adoring the name of Jesus. Is it surprising that the Antichrist who seeks for himself all the glory and honour, induces the people to forget the name of Jesus. The Bible clearly forewarns us that when the Antichrist, 'son of perdition', is revealed to the world, he will be seated posing as Lord Almighty Himself, in the house of God in Jerusalem.

"Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God"
(II Thess. 2:4)

The gift of discerning of spirits, operating under these circumstances, empowers us to identify and rebuke the spirit of the Antichrist with authority.

It is the presence of the Holy Spirit which restrains the Antichrist from revealing himself entirely and indulging in his antics in the world today. This truth is confirmed in II Thessalonians 2:6,7,8.

"...now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains (the Holy Spirit) will do so until He is taken out

of the way.

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming"

There is a wide and constant speculation about who this Antichrist is!

Some had asserted positively that since the ship in which Anwar Sadat, the President of Egypt travelled to make peace with Israel was numbered 666, it is he who is the Antichrist. Alas, he was assassinated much to the sorrow of the whole world.

Some others put forward the view that Mr. Kissinger, the former Secretary of State, in the U.S.A., was the Antichrist, taking his efficiency to settle international disputes into reckoning. He left his assignment at the end of his term in the Government.

Yet others held the belief that Gorbachev, the President of Russia, who brought about revolutionary changes in his country was truly, the Antichrist. He too retired after his term, as any other President of any country.

All these futile speculations are due to the fact that we don't have the gift of discerning of spirits in us. Let us turn to the Lord to fill us with this wonderful gift. Then we can find out whether people have been afflicted by the wicked spirits, and activate ourselves in the task of delivering the people from their grips.

The Holy Spirit!

When our beloved Jesus was to leave this earth, He gave the following words of comfort to His grief-stricken disciples:

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you"

(John 14:16-18)

Yes! Jesus, very clearly and specifically, expounded the Holy Spirit, whom He was going to receive from His Father and send down to earth, in John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7,13. Alas! Some people, without understanding the power of the Holy Spirit, assert that all signs, wonders and miracles are only due to the devil and that the Holy Spirit's manifestations are only the manifestations of the devil. These presumptuous pronouncements will only make them the target of divine wrath. When Jesus, the Son of God was walking on this earth and when the Holy Spirit operated through Jesus and delivered the people from the devil's grips (Acts 10:38), many, unaware of this truth, called Jesus as "one possessed by Beelzebub". The warning given by Jesus to those sceptical critics, in that context, remains a perennial warning given to all people, generation after generation, instilling divine fear in them. The Bible has recorded it in the following verses: *"But when the Pharisees heard it they said, 'This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons'*

Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men."

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come"
(Matt. 12:24,31,32)

Many years ago, a servant of God was offering intercessory prayers for a gathering of people with problems and diseases, in a church. At that time they brought a lady, considered to be devoutly pious. She complained, saying, "Sir, this Bronchial Asthma has been tormenting me for the past thirty years."

The servant of God prayed for her with tears and great

compassion. But abruptly he stopped his prayer and told the lady with anguish, "Madam, 30 years ago, a group of workers for Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit came to your town, and preached in your street. But you, misunderstanding them, went about visiting all houses in your town, one by one, and spreading the rumour that those people were filled with evil spirits and they should not be accepted. With this false propaganda, you drove the Gospel team out of your town. You have incurred the divine indignation for calling the Holy Spirit as 'evil spirit', audaciously. You have committed an unforgivable sin, as it is against the Holy Spirit. Only from that time, you have been suffering from this terrible disease." She broke down and cried and admitted it was true.

All servants of God should, necessarily, possess the gift of discerning of spirits, so that they can prevent people from incurring the divine wrath and punishment.

Recently the world renowned Pastor Benny Hinn, while preaching in a city, narrated an episode from the life of Kathryn Kuhlman who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, sent tremors over the whole world. She had been preaching in the city of Niagara Falls. The presence of the Holy Spirit did not descend for quite a long time. Expecting His presence, she went on continuing her sermon for nearly two hours; the people began to doze off, in weariness. All of a sudden she said, "Just a second" and looked up at the skies. The next instant, the whole place was filled with the Holy Spirit. Miracles started happening all over the place. The miracles were quite extraordinary, never seen before!

Yes! The lady was able to discern the coming down of the Holy Spirit; that is why she gave the signal. My dear ones! The matchless gift of discerning of spirits is imparted to us, so that we can instantly become aware of the presence and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. If we are endowed with this gift, we will lead a life pleasing to the Lord; we will never give any cause to aggrieve the Holy Spirit. The demons will flee at the very sight of us, and people will get relieved from diseases and darkness and live a blissful life. Let us start praying for this gift today itself!

7. The Gift of Faith!

Biblical Reference: I Corinthians 12:9

Faith is qualified by the term "precious" in II Peter 1:1; it is precious faith, as expressed there. God has called us by glory and virtue that we may 'be partakers of His divine nature' (II Pet. 1:3,4).

The Abode of Faith!

Faith is one of the characteristics of God. Hebrews 11:3 assures us that through faith God created the world. Our Lord Jesus is portrayed as 'the author and finisher' of faith (Heb. 12:1,2).

Explanation of Faith!

The act of faith is explained in Hebrews 11:6: as below:
"...he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"

How Faith Enters into Us!

1. When we are born again!

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name"
(John 1:12)

According to this verse, the day we confess all our weaknesses and receive our forgiveness, that day itself, the Lord Jesus not only forgives us our sins, but also accepts us as 'His children', as well. We who are 'by nature children of wrath' (Eph.2:3), are washed by His blood, to be transformed and recognized as blameless and harmless, dear children of God (Phil. 2:15 ; Eph. 5:1). Then the Almighty God accepts us as His 'adopted' children along with His own son, Jesus. The following verses confirm this truth:

"Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:5,6)

When we become His adopted children, we receive the Spirit of adoption into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:14,15). Involuntarily, in our prayers, we begin to address Him as, "Abba, Father!" A divine faith that there is one in Heaven, who is our God and whom we have the right to call 'Father' is born in our hearts; calling Him as "Abba, Father!", we begin to plead for our needs. We become born again. Faith, too, originates this way.

Several years ago, when I had been to Canada, I preached in a conference. At the end of that day's meeting, a huge number of people came in a long line, so that I could pray for them, one by one. When I was praying for the last person, it was 12 midnight. That last person was a young girl, whose request was a strange one! She said, "Sir, I felt the flooding of love in your words and prayers. I am an orphan, in the eyes of the world. Will you give me permission to call you, Daddy?" This was her request.

I told her, deeply moved, "My dear girl, I had a 17-year-old daughter; she too left me dying in a horrible car accident. So if you call me 'Daddy' the term will be sweeter than honey to my shattered heart!" That was all! She hugged me, fell on my neck, kissing me several times and shouted with joy, "Thank you! Thank you!"

As jubilantly as this girl, we too can call the invisible God,

"Abba, Father!", when we accept Him as our Father; He will embolden us to call Him so, by sending His divine Spirit into us. Faith is born in our hearts through Him instantaneously and we begin to approach Him and pray to Him even for our minor needs; when we receive His replies for them, we become ecstatic. Hebrews 11:6 explains this life of faith thus:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"

2. Through the word of God!

Romans 10:17, informs us that faith comes by the word of God. Romans 10:8 calls 'the word of the Bible, as the 'word of faith'. When we read the Bible, the word of God, we do feel that our heavenly Father is talking to us through it. Spontaneously, our minds accept all His promises in the Bible as given to us personally. When the apostle Peter talks about God's promises, he affirms,

"For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call"
(Acts 2:39)

St. Paul also says in II Corinthians 1:20,
"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us"

As I Peter 1:25 says that 'the word of the Lord endures for ever', God's promises, which are His words too, will endure for ever. Any of us, irrespective of our age, can claim God's words as our own rights. Consequently, after accepting Christ, when we read the words of the Bible, all the promises seem to be, and quite rightly so, meant for us personally by our heavenly Father. Involuntarily, we begin to ask our Father to fulfil His promises.

"And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened"
(Luke 11:9,10)

He also gladly grants our requests, as testified by the verses quoted above.

"If you ask anything in My name, I will do it"

(John 14:14)

"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full"

(John 16:24)

How true these promissory words of our Lord are!

A staunch member of a political party, the cardinal principle of which is that 'Labour welfare' is the only true service to God, turned to Christ and accepted Him as his personal Saviour. As a result, his life was transformed. He began to go over to all places, preaching the word of God, with the sole motive that he should share his new found joy, with people, all over the world. He used to wear spectacles for his short sight. In the course of his ministry, he found the spectacles an impediment, while preaching.

One day, while reading the Bible, God's promise in Exodus 15:26, "I am the Lord who heals you" touched his heart greatly. Faith rose up in his heart. He cried out to God thus: "O Lord, wearing these spectacles is a big handicap to my ministry. I am going to throw it away now, as I don't want it. Kindly grant me perfect vision, from now." And he threw away his spectacles, which was shattered into smithereens. What a great marvel! Immediately his eyes brightened up, giving him a clear normal sight.

Perhaps this may appear, to our mind, a dangerous, risky test. However, it does show us that the faith that the word of God had imparted to that man of God was so stupendous and spontaneous that it made the impossible a reality, a miracle!

3. Through the Holy Spirit!

When the Holy Spirit descends on us, He brings into us God's divine nature.

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor.3:18)

As witnessed by this word, the Holy Spirit comes into us so that our inward man gets transformed into the image of God, moving 'from glory to glory'. That is to say. He brings God's "Faith" into us. The faith that the Holy Spirit brings to us is of two categories.

a) The fruit of the Spirit!

As mentioned in Galatians 5:22,23, the Holy Spirit plants in

us, the 'Fruit' of the Spirit. A list of blessings accruing from the 'Fruit' of the Spirit is given there:

"...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..."

In this list, we find mention of the term, "Faith". This faith pertains to our hope concerning our life hereafter in Heaven. This hope only moves us to keep our life on earth, pure and holy. Our gracious Lord Jesus has stated, before leaving the earth, in John 14:2,3,4, about Heaven thus:

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

And where I go you know, and the way you know"

The wonderful experiences which the Lord keeps in store for us when we reach Heaven, after running our race on earth, are delineated in I Corinthians 2:9; Psalm 31:19 and Isaiah 64:4. The Holy Spirit creates in us a faith regarding our heavenly life, so that we will live with an eager anticipation of these blessings, in this world. This is what is seen as the "Faith" that comes as the 'Fruit' of the Spirit.

In a hilly country, there lived an uncivilized sect of tribals, who would exhibit the skulls of the men whom they had killed, on their doorposts. The more the number of such skulls, the more would be their prestige and honour! In their midst a youth turned into a child of Christ; his nature was completely transformed. He was amazed at the divine peace which Jesus graciously granted him; he was enraptured by the divine holiness which came into him. He joined a theological college with the sole motive that he should share with his people the joy of salvation and transform his bloodthirsty people into lovers of peace. With the added knowledge of the love of Christ gained through his studies, he returned to his place and began to preach the love of Christ to his people. They berated his preaching as the 'teaching of cowards'. They threatened to kill him also.

One night, there was a knock at his door; when he opened the door and peeped out, he saw a group of fiendish men. They asked him, "Are you going to stop preaching about That' Jesus or not? This is the last chance we give you." The young man replied, "It was Jesus who gave me a new life, transforming me and saving me from ending up in hell, forgiving me my shortcomings and sins; how can I forget my great friend, who

has helped me so much?" That was all! They dragged him out of his house and hacked him to death, cutting his body into several pieces before the very eyes of his wife and son. The wife and son fell over the bleeding body and wept aloud. His body was buried with the help of a few good people.

A few days passed! Some well intentioned people advised her to leave the place with her son, lest the ruffians assail them too. You know what she replied! She boldly said, "I am going to live in this place and continue the ministry left behind by my husband. We will be only too happy, if they kill us too for that! Because my husband is in Heaven, sitting on the lap of our heavenly Father; we, too, would go and share his joy. In fact, they will be doing a great service and help by killing us." They were stunned with her faith! Their hearts were deeply touched by her firm, unassailable and incomparable faith. Her divine love for Jesus deeply moved their hearts; many became the children of God. This is a true incident!

My dear ones, we begin to believe in God's promises, as soon as we are transformed into His children through our experience of salvation. But when we receive the Holy Spirit, all these promises of God become acutely perceptible in our heart and so real and solidified that we almost can touch them. They don't appear like empty stories. Yes! The fruit of faith makes the life yet to come, a total reality which can be seen with our own eyes.

b) The gift of faith!

As we read in Mark 11:22, our Saviour, Lord Jesus Christ taught, "Have faith in God!" We find the same truth repeated in John 14:1 too. This faith is, however, granted as a gift by the Holy Spirit. The same faith, which was manifested in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, in all their handiworks comes upon us, too.

It induces us to believe in the supernatural happenings; it also makes use of us to perform wonderful things to glorify God's name. This truth is explained in Acts 3:16, as follows: ***"And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all"***

Before we delve deeper into this truth, we will consider what the faith of God is like!

The Faith of God!

1. Calls those things which do not exist as though they did! (Rom.4:17)

The Lord created 'the earth and all things therein' out of void. Hebrews 11:3, Acts 17:24 and Psalm 24:1,2 testify that He accomplished it by faith.

I had the rare privilege of meeting the astronaut, Charles Duke, who had landed on the moon. When he was narrating his cosmic experiences, he made an emphatic point. Looking down at the earth from space, the earth we live in appeared so small that he felt it could be overshadowed by the palm of his hand. Not only that! It looked as though it was hanging without any support. When he returned to the earth, he was impressed by one vital truth God has spoken in the Bible, found in Job 26:7, ***"He (God) stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing"***

Yes! What had touched the heart of the astronaut was the later part of God's word: "He hangs the earth on nothing." Yes! But what supports the earth which is hanging in space, is spelt out in Hebrews 1:3. The Almighty Lord, who created the whole cosmic universe by His word is upholding it 'by the word of His power'. Yes! He created all things out of 'nothingness' or 'void' by His all powerful 'word'! He is upholding it even today. When the gift of faith is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, we are also empowered by an audacious faith to perform great miracles like this.

In May 1981, I had gone to a hill resort for relaxation. One day when I was praying alone, our Lord Jesus appeared before me and spoke to me face to face thus: "My son! Thousands and thousands of young men and women have given up their bad habits and sinful pleasures and committed themselves to a righteous path of holy life through your ministry. But they should not backslide and go back to their life of sin, aggrieved by lack of employment and lack of material prosperity to support themselves. These young people will be sustained in the righteous path, only if they are made to stand on their own feet, quite capable of earning a good income. Otherwise they will go back to their sinful life. For their sake, a University imparting to them knowledge of higher technology should be started."

I was quite taken aback! Because I was working in a Bank in

a responsible position. In all my spare time, I was busy preaching to all broken-hearted people, sharing the word, "God is Love" and praying for miracles to heal their body and soul. And so, I was very pessimistic about fulfilling that vision. I was pondering over the vision for many years, in my prayers and didn't do anything to implement the project.

Realising my limitation in faith, in May 1984, the Lord appeared to me once again! He encouraged me and gave me detailed instructions regarding the establishment of the University, step by step. One of the stipulations He made was this: "The location of the place where you are going to establish the University should have abundant water resources, unfailing supply of electricity and a congenial climate!"

So we started searching for such a spot; our efforts were futile. Again, I waited at the feet of our Lord, one whole day, with fasting and prayer. The Lord appeared to me in a vision and showed me a place called Siruvani surrounded by hills all around, 550 miles away from Madras. Pointing to me the foot of the hills surrounding that place, He said, "Go and inherit it; that is the place, I have chosen!" When I shared this vision with my friends clearly, they were thrilled! We travelled to the "promised land" with great excitement. That place was quite new to us. When we reached the spot, we were thrilled to find it as exactly as shown by the Lord in that vision. But the people of that area told us that not even an inch of land in that place was for sale. I was baffled; but the Lord commanded a steadfast faith in the heart of my father, who was 72 that time. Taking it as a challenge to his faith, he said firmly, "All of you return to Madras. I will stay back and definitely purchase this land. God will certainly help us!"

We were pleasantly surprised at his faith; and so, we returned home. For six months, my father was wandering all over the area, visiting various fields, making enquiries and walking up and down to the houses of various people owning patches of lands there. A local gentleman of a very good nature used to accompany and guide my father to their houses. No piece of land was coming up for sale!

After six months, one day the good natured companion of my father broke down touched by his undaunted faith. He told him, "Sir, you have been walking up and down in this area for six months; nothing could be achieved. Yet, your hope of getting a land has not decreased. I am deeply stirred up in my heart with your steadfast faith. I have a piece of land here,

measuring 50 acres. I will give you that entire stretch of land, first." He sold the land to us. That was a real break through! Today, Karunya Institute of Technology stands there majestically in the same place with its vast campus stretching over 500 acres!

Yes! Even today, the Lord can create everything out of nothing, calling Those things that do not exist, as though they did! (Rom. 4:17). He commands the same faith as a gift to come upon us, at the time of our deep desperation.

2. Light out of darkness!

II Corinthians 6:14 warns us, 'What communion has light with darkness?' Yet God has the ultimate say in everything. The ultimate authority is His! II Corinthians 4:6 really thrills us with the statement that God 'commanded light to shine out of darkness.' Genesis 1:2-4 affirm that the Lord commanded 'light to shine from the darkness' that was on the face of the deep. Again I John 1:5 testifies: "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." It is indeed appropriate that, James 1:17 bestows on God a splendid nomenclature, "Father of lights." Daniel 2:22 praises God thus:

"...He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him"

Yes! When He commanded, "Let there be light", the divine light which proceeded from Him, who is 'Light', brought light out of darkness. The Psalmist gives us a consoling statement on God's concern for the righteous.

"Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness..."
(Ps. 112:4)

This word expounds the delicious truth that circumstances may bring about a darkness around our life. But God makes light to streak out of our darkness with His divine light.

On 21.5.1986, in a gruesome car accident, we lost our beloved daughter. She was our joy in our home. We cherished her as dear as precious gold. Great darkness descended on our souls! We felt that our life had been entirely darkened; we were lamenting: "What more have we got to live for in this world? How nice it would have been, if we had also died along with her?" About six dark weeks later, one morning, we sat down for our usual traditional family prayer. A victim of that horrible accident, I had my fractured arm in a sling. My wife too was suffering from a fractured neck. My son, my father and a nurse

who had come to help us participated in the prayer.

Quite suddenly, the Holy Spirit descended upon us mightily and filled us immeasurably. For about 45 minutes, we were not aware of where we were! The Holy Spirit filled us through and through. We felt that a great burden and a veil of darkness had been lifted away by someone. We heard the sweet voice of the Lord Jesus! He said: "Your daughter Angel is with Me; I am also shedding tears with you. Nevertheless, in the presence of the angels and the devil himself, I have thrown a challenge that you will continue My ministry even amidst this horrible situation. Will you make me bow My head down in shame before them?" All of us, without our knowledge, in one voice, cried out loudly, "Lord, We will never put You to shame." The prayer was over; we felt an undefinable faith shining in our hearts, as a light out of darkness.

The very next month, we started to do our ministry all over again. In the first ensuing Good News Meeting we took part, multitudes of people had gathered, perhaps, just to find out what our mental attitude was towards our ministry after that terrible accident. I got up, with a troubled mind, to preach. But the same original faith surged up in me, and as usual, I gave a message of hope! When I prayed after the sermon, the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit commenced operating in me, and I called out the names of the people who were being touched by God. When those people came to the stage to give their witness, all were amazed. Many people were healed miraculously, that day.

From that day, we have been continuing our Lord's ministry. God, who brought light over the years non-stop out of darkness, through His gift of faith, has expelled the darkness in our minds, and brought light out of our darkness by imparting His faith to us through His Holy Spirit.

3. Power to create a new heart!

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer.17:9)

In this verse, the Bible describes the natural human heart, which has not gained forgiveness of sins. Yet God can create a new heart out of this primitive heart. When a young man, Saul, came to Samuel, the prophet, he told Saul one important prophecy which would be fulfilled on his way back home.

"Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and he turned into another man" (I

Sam.10:6)

The fulfilment of Samuel's prophecy is reported in I Samuel 10:9.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek.36:26)

According to the above quoted verse, God is capable of creating a new heart out of our fleshly, 'stony' heart. That is why, II Corinthians 5:17 asserts, as follows:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"

When we go to various places to preach the Gospel, especially among people who consciously oppose the Good News, or among people who have never heard of the Good News, God grants us a matchless "Faith". God who transformed the heart of Saul and gave him a new heart, still is able to transform any heart. The gift of faith lets us believe that God has the power to do it again for the people; it encourages us greatly to preach with a deep faith that many people may be led towards salvation and transformation, even today.

Every time the "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings are arranged in prominent cities, we have to go through the same moments of agony as Jesus went through in the Garden of Gethsemane. In preparation for these meetings, we fast for many days, praying earnestly. Our gracious Lord will come down, and clearly and precisely impart to us, to me, my wife and my son, the exact Gospel truths which we should preach. Then I will wait at the feet of our Lord for a new anointing, and grace to come down upon us and that particular city for demonstrating His power. This is the toughest time; I will shed tears of blood, undergoing the agony of Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane as explained in Luke 22:40-44. An unbearable burden for the souls in that particular city will acutely surge into my heart.

At these times, in order to keep the people of that city under their continual bondage of sin, the evil spirits, The prince of the power of the air' (Eph.2:2) and The spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Eph.6:12) will appear before me; wrestling with them, I will pray on my knees, with great travail, sweating profusely. The great burden for the souls of the city will make me 'labour in birth', as mentioned by St. Paul in Galatians 4:19. All of a sudden, our gracious Lord

Jesus will appear, and at His sight, the evil spirits would bow down and disappear. Every dark cloud would also vanish. My heart would become light again. Then the promise of Jesus will ring out: "That place has been given in your hands."

At that time, a divine anointing will descend on me. I will be filled to overflowing, with an unparalleled faith that all the souls in that place belong to Jesus and not the devil. Only this unwavering faith will give me the authority to preach the Gospel in that place uncompromisingly and rebuke the powers of darkness that have kept the people bound in their bondage.

Once I had been to a big city to preach the Gospel in a "Jesus Calls" Good News Meeting, where nearly 300,000 people had gathered. When a particular man came to the stage to give his witness, weeping bitterly, the whole crowd of people was astounded; because, he was a notorious personality in that town; a very cruel hearted man; a drunkard; a man with all conceivable vices; a villain who had planned a murder in the ensuing week; and a sceptic who hated all spiritual meetings and who played havoc at such meetings. In fact, he had come to that particular meeting also with that evil purpose. Propped up against a lamp post, he was listening to my message, fully drunk. As I was going on describing the incomparable love of Jesus, that man's heart began to soften and melt.

When I finally gave the altar call, inviting all those who desired to have their hearts transformed, so that I could pray for them, he ran towards the stage, unaware of what he was doing. The boundless love of Jesus descended into his heart. Just in one minute, God transformed his entire life. He went home as a new man; he fell at the feet of his wife and children and asked for their forgiveness for the cruel way in which he had treated them till then. That was the first day when joy flooded their home. Today, he is a servant of God preaching the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; his family is immersed in great rejoicing now.

Yes! The gift of faith gives us the firm conviction, while we preach the word of God, that God will completely transform the stony hearts, through us. The souls are indeed transformed in a miraculous way.

Operation of the Gift of Faith!

Several years ago, I visited a hydro project which generates electricity from water. On that occasion, what the Engineers told me struck me with wonder: "Sir, we cannot store up electricity here; we can only produce electricity. When water falls with force on the giant wheels, they rotate producing electricity. When the flowing of the water stops, the giant wheels stop; the production of electricity also is stopped."

In the same way, faith can never be stored. We have to keep the gift of faith in constant operation. We should take certain precautions to keep the gift of faith glowing and flowing at all times.

1. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit!

The Bible portrays the friendship that existed between David and Jonathan thus:

"...the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul"

(1 Sam. 18:1)

Genesis 44:30 pictures the bond between the lives of Jacob and his son, Benjamin:

"...his (Jacob's) life is bound up in the lad's (Benjamin's) life"

In the same way, the Bible says, "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (I Cor.6:17), we should be always united with the Lord; only then can the Holy Spirit keep on pouring this faith continually into our souls. That is why, in Ephesians 5:18, God has commanded us: "Be filled with the Spirit." Only when we are continually united with God, He can give us faith in proportion to the toughness of the situation, and at times when we require it.

Once I visited a Snake Park. Different types of snakes were preserved in specially prepared pits. There was a venomous Cobra, lying there, as though dead. Our guide poked at its tail with a stick. That was all! It raised its hood to a height of about one and a half feet, ready to strike.

Similarly, the faith given by God lies dormant in our soul. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, everyday, He preserves in us this faith alive always and makes it spring up with force to work on our behalf, according to the times of need.

2. Faith generated by the gift of prophecy!

King Jehoshaphat was a peerless man in observing all the commandments of God and conducting his affairs with the fear

of God. But quite suddenly, without any provocation, people of some countries rose up to wage war against him (II Chr.20:1,2). The baffled king "set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord" (II Chr.20:3,4). When they prayed together, 'the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel' and through him God consoled His people and gave them a prophecy:

"...the battle is not yours, but God's" (II Chr.20:15)

Next, He told them what steps they should take the next day (II Chr.20:16,17). They went to the battle, not with fear and trembling. As the songsters 'went out before the army', singing, "Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures for ever" (II Chr.20:21), the enemies who came up against them, rose against each other and destroyed one another (II Chr.20:23). The battle was won, without lifting a single sword, through the Holy Spirit. Yes! Through the gift of prophecy, springs up in our hearts, the gift of faith.

After our Lord Jesus appeared to me in a vision and commanded me to establish an Engineering College, which would flourish into a University, in future, I was told that the budget estimate for the college was 12 crores of rupees (U.S.\$ 4.1 million that time). According to Government regulations, I had to build it up within a stipulated time; so in my attempt to raise the required amount of money as loan, there was no bank or institution, which I did not approach. The invariable reply to my request was a big "No!" Utterly depressed, I cried at the feet of our gracious Lord, shedding tears of bitter grief, "Lord, to fulfil Your command, I am undergoing all these tribulations; all my efforts to raise the required money have failed. What can I do now?"

At that time, our Lord's presence filled me. The Lord spoke to me through His Spirit. God pointed to my remembrance the name of a big Industrialist who, two years earlier, had come to me seeking my intercession for him. The Industrialist had come to me as a broken-hearted person as he had met with a huge loss in his industry; his partner himself had deceived him. He was brought to me, in a depressed state of mind, for prayers, by a friend. He didn't have much knowledge about the Lord. The Holy Spirit came upon me with a word from God. I told him, "Sir! Please forget the past. Please start the industry once again. The Lord would give everything back to you in double measure."

The Holy Spirit recasting this scene before my eyes, told me: "Go and see that person; he would get you the required amount as a bank loan." Accordingly, I went to meet him. Do you know what he told me? He said, "Sir, two years ago, I came to you, having lost everything. You gave me the divine word that I would regain in double measure all that I had lost. Today, I have regained eight times my loss! I will never forget you; I will be always grateful to you. I accept the application for a loan you have handed to me, as if I am receiving it from the holy hands of God Himself! You may not know that I am the Director of a bank. I will definitely make it possible for you to get the loan." He did just so!

Yes! When we stand depressed, the gift of faith will operate in us through the gift of prophecy.

3. Faith through visions from God!

After receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit, as promised by his Master, Jesus Christ, the apostle Peter was doing His ministry among the Jews alone. One day as he was praying, he was feeling very hungry; at that time he was shown a divine vision three times, which opened his eyes of wisdom. Through that vision, the Lord made him realise that he should accept not just the Jews alone but the Gentiles also within his fold. Transformed by this vision from God, he began to assert, "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But, in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34,35).

Only these visions from God inspired in him a faith that enabled him to preach the Good News of Jesus among the Gentiles, the non-Jews, for the first time. When we started before huge crowds of people to preach in public meetings, it is vital that we prove that Jesus is still alive. To do this, signs and wonders are absolutely necessary. The gift of faith will help us to bring about these miracles. To induce the gift of faith, God mercifully gives us His visions.

Once, I stood up to preach in a public meeting in a city called Trichur in India; inside were fears, anxieties, doubts and burdens (II Cor.7:5). During the time of prayer, the Holy Spirit descended on me. In a divine vision, He picturised a young girl before me, showing me her visage and even the type of dress she had on. Though my eyes were not open, amidst the thronging crowd, He showed her appearance through that vision. Then He also put into my tongue the words I should

pronounce to her. A great incomparable faith burst into me. My fears and doubts fled and vanished!

I called the name, "Esther!" I gave a description of her appearance and her prayer at that time: "O Lord, it does not matter even if I remain unmarried; use me, granting me all the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit." That was all! A young girl, from among the crowd, came running to the stage. She said, "I come here after travelling nearly 1000 miles. Just now I reached this place by train. Throwing all my luggage into a hotel room, I came rushing straight to this meeting. As you said I have different names, but my parents call me Esther. I am not married yet; this is quite a disappointment. But as you said, I was praying that if the Lord gives me His "Gifts", I will do His ministry, even though I have to live alone. When you were referring to me, a divine power descended upon me and a luminous light shone around me." This one witness shook all the people there. It proved that Jesus is alive! The whole situation of disbelief was changed topsy-turvy:

True! Visions from God, which come through the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge, inspire the gift of faith.

4. Faith through the presence of God!

As testified by Hebrews 12:1,2, the author of faith is Jesus Christ. Where He is, there, faith by itself will sparkle and the gift of faith will be activated in us, quite mightily.

Many years ago, I was overtaken by a severe disease; life became bitter to me. One day four friends of mine prayed with tears, for me. While they were praying for me, the Holy Spirit descended on me. He took me to Heaven, in Spirit. In Heaven, Jesus was waiting for me in a distinctive place. In front of Him was a table made of gold. He asked me, "Will you come forward to do My ministry full-time?" But I was thinking that He would talk to me about my illness and heal me.

So I was very much vexed by this question and replied to Him, "No, I have no desire at all to do full-time ministry." He asked me, "Why?" I told Him, "In my country, You have called many persons to do Your ministry. But all of them are languishing in hunger, starvation and lack of many basic needs of life. They don't have even proper clothing to wear or proper footwear. It is pathetic to behold them. Today, I have a good Bank job; I get sufficient food to eat, three times a day, at least; I have proper clothing. Why should I come forward to do full-time ministry, giving up all these?" He gave me a clarification

for all my doubts. Finally, with a sweet smile, He asked, "If I give My word to provide all your needs unfailingly, will you come forward to take up full-time ministry?"

This kind of discussion went on for a while between Him and me. In the end I agreed to do His full-time ministry on certain conditions. One of the terms was my request: "Lord, whenever I stand up to preach, You must stand by me and perform signs and wonders, as I desire." He wrote down all my four requests, one by one, in a beautiful scroll. Beneath that, He wrote with a feather like pen made of gold: "I, Jesus, promise to grant all these to My son, Dhinakaran." Then He wrote "I, D.G.S. Dhinakaran hereby consent to dedicate myself for full-time ministry for Jesus." Underneath this He signed beautifully, in English, "Jesus Christ". He made me also sign in that scroll.

According to this covenant, when I stand up, filled with the Holy Spirit, to preach, I am able to see Him, in Spirit. That is why, a divine faith begins to function in me, whenever I stand up on the stage to preach.

Yes! It is His presence that inspires faith in us and quickens the gift of faith to act. So let us 'walk' with Him daily, under all circumstances, like the Biblical saints of old, such as Enoch and Noah. Let us sustain His presence forever with us, by reading the Holy Bible, praying and being filled with the Spirit. Then He will bless every word that comes out of our mouth. We will be the golden 'vessels for honour' in His hand, 'sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work' (II Tim.2:21).

5. Through love, the stimulant!

It is 'love' that kindles and stimulates faith, within us. Doesn't Galatians 5:6 talk of 'faith working through love?' What prompted Jesus Christ to perform mighty miracles? Was it not His compassionate love! The most wonderful of all His miracles was that of raising the dead Lazarus to life, four days after his death. Jesus loved Martha and her sister (Mary) and Lazarus (John 11:5). Yet when he had been fatally sick, He did not go there immediately but reached the place four days after his death. When the beloved sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha fell at His feet crying, "Lord, if You had been here, our brother would not have died" (John 11:21), He was troubled. When He saw them and the Jews of that place weep, He 'groaned in the spirit and was troubled'. Finally, the Bible tells us, 'Jesus wept'

(John 11:33-35). Yes! He broke down and wept openly.

"...love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame"

(Song 8:6)

As described in the verse above, jealousy (extreme love) surged in the mind of Jesus; He was firmly determined to raise up Lazarus. This in its wake, stirred up the audacious faith within Him. When Martha lamented, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days", Jesus, moved by His great faith chided her saying, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:39,40).

Yes! Only such love and compassion which spring up in our hearts, enkindle the gift of faith to be operative in an insurmountable manner.

Several years ago, I had been to a city, on an official business pertaining to my Bank. As the news of my presence in the city spread like wildfire, the people there persistently insisted that a public meeting should be arranged for me to preach to them, next evening. I had no other alternative, than to consent to their request.

Next evening came! A vast number of people had flocked from all directions; the police found it difficult even to guide my car to somewhere near the dais. At last, I got down from my car and walked up to the dais, escorted by volunteers so that people might not press upon me. Such a dense crowd! Before I reached the dais, a woman managed to break the cordon of volunteers, fell at my feet. I gently pleaded with her to get up. Slowly she lifted herself up and handed over an envelope to me, with tears in her eyes. While I hastily shoved it into my pocket, a divine compassion came over me, on seeing her tears. I said to her with tears: "My dear sister! May God bless you!" The next instant my volunteer friends pushed me gently on to the dais.

Three days afterwards, I went to meet a pastor in a nearby place. The same sister was there. The pastor, introducing her to me, narrated her wonderful experience. He said, "Brother, this lady had a problem, a dislocation of the joint in her right arm which had slipped from the socket. She was undergoing excruciating pain in her arm, all the 24 hours of the day. Doctors, who failed in their attempt to set it right, ruled that

she had to live with that pain. But God took compassion on her. That day when you said to her, on your way to the dais, "My dear sister! May God bless you!", filled with the compassion of Jesus Christ, the very same instant, a miracle happened. The disjointed arm was lifted up a little and fitted into the socket by the power of God in the right manner. That pain which was killing her for 8 long years vanished instantaneously.

Yes! It is only perfect love that inspires and stimulates faith. The Son of God has assured us, as reported in Mark 11:23, "He will have whatever he says." Words spoken with faith, induced by love, will be fulfilled accurately in a miraculous manner.

The Gift of Faith Interlinked with Other Gifts!

"...He (God) changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him"

(Dan. 2:21,22)

According to these verses, the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge reveal to us what is hidden and what is in the dark. But it is the gift of faith which gives us the strength and firm determination to declare to the world what the Lord has graciously revealed to us through those two gifts. Because, our natural heart is always assailed by doubts, as evidenced by the following Biblical verse:

"... let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive any thing from the Lord"
(James 1:6,7)

Doubts and fears are inherent qualities born with us. So these qualities always prevent us from declaring to people their hidden shortcomings as well as

God's ultimate 'Master Plan' for them, revealed to us by God. What helps to overcome these doubts and fears is the gift of faith.

"...perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment..." (I John 4:18)

When we receive a revelation from God regarding those for whom we pray, doubts and fears will naturally confuse us; but if we want to pass on the revelation to them, we need love and compassion for them. This love induces the gift of faith, to move within us which, in turn, gives us a fearless boldness to declare the divine revelations.

Once a devout God-fearing Bishop had been admitted to a hospital. Doctors considered that he had cancer in his stomach. His parishioners, his family members and why, the Bishop himself were all grief stricken. There was a servant of God, who loved the Bishop profoundly. He, propelled by God's love, prayed for the Bishop with a great burden.

The Spirit of God descended on him and revealed to him through the gift of the word of knowledge that there was only an ulcer in the Bishop's stomach and not cancer. Then the gift

of the word of wisdom, let him know that there was no danger to the life of the Bishop. But it was the gift of faith, which, activated by love, prompted the servant of God to go and convey these revelations to the Bishop. So he rushed to the hospital and told the Bishop, "I have come with an important message from the Lord." When he informed the Bishop of the word of wisdom, the Bishop shed tears of joy. He sprang up from his sick bed and sat on it, abruptly, and said, "I am going to continue my ministry." The doctors were surprised. When all clinical tests were made both in the particular hospital and abroad, they confirmed that it was not cancer, but only a common ulcer.

Yes! The gift of faith is stimulated within us by love. Just as Jesus was full of love and compassion within Him, let us beg the Lord for the same love and compassion to fill us in an abundant measure. Oh! Let us be filled with the Holy Spirit without measure, like our Lord, so that He can pour this love into us in an immeasurable way!

1. The gifts of healings!

a) The gift of discerning of spirits!

When we see people afflicted with diverse diseases or possessed by demons, we feel a little disinclined to pray for them. However, the gift of faith provides us with a brave and fearless heart in this kind of situation. Possessed by a mute spirit, a small boy who had a suicidal tendency to run into fire or water, was brought to our Lord Jesus Christ by his father. Jesus told the father of the boy, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." And the man cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:23,24). The man, confessing his unbelief, had already requested Jesus to have compassion on them and help them. His tears melted the heart of Christ. So, without expecting "absolute and perfect" faith from the man, Jesus used His own faith, drove away that deaf and dumb spirit and released the boy from bondage (Mark 9:17-27).

We too, while preaching in public meetings tell the people the same 'word', "If you can believe, all things are possible." But, when a man is struggling with deep despair, assailed by the thought that it is better to die than to live, tormented by a horrible disease, is it not natural that he cannot develop faith? So, while dealing with such people, the Holy Spirit stirs up

within us a deep love and compassion. 'When Jesus Christ 'saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them' (Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34); voluntarily He went out and healed their sick (Matt.14:14). That very same compassion fills our hearts.

Many years ago, I was travelling by car from one big city to another town, on an official business of my Bank. The name of a village, on the way, attracted me, because it was from that village, a sister was frequently writing letters requesting me to pray for her diseased husband. I told the driver of my car to take the car into that village. With great difficulty, I managed to find out the house of that sister.

When I entered the house, both the sister and her husband could not believe their eyes! "Is it Brother Dhinakaran?" was all they could say, with total unbelief. Nevertheless what I saw there moved my heart. Just minutes before I had gone there, the husband totally disgusted with lying in sickbed with no relief at sight, had asked his wife to carry him along with his cot outside the house and to leave him there. He had said, "Let me die in this cot itself in the open courtyard; I won't recover my health." He was persistent in his request though all his friends begged him to drop his funny and unacceptable request. So he had been finally brought out of the house and left to lie in the scorching sun. It was just at that time, I had entered, by the grace of God. I took him into the home again and spoke to him words of comfort (Prov. 12:25) and prayed for him with overflowing tears. The gift of faith sprang out from within me. The gift of faith became operative; I rebuked the disease. Amazingly, he recovered.

The family is living happily even now. Several years later, when I referred to them as a witness to a milling crowd of people in a Good News Meeting which I conducted in Tirunelveli, in South India, quite unexpectedly, the same couple who had come to attend the meeting came to the stage and testified, "We are the couple whom you have referred to, today." When they testified to the whole gathering in detail what had happened to them, the people shed tears of joy.

b) The gift of prophecy!

As reported in **I Peter 1:10-12**, God gave many prophetic words regarding Christ, which shocked the Old Testament prophets themselves. They probed into the time of fulfilment of these prophetic words. Likewise, there is an appointed time for

the fulfilment of any prophecy (Eccl. 8:6,7). So, at certain times, we are doubtful about the fulfilment of prophecies, which we receive and we are a little scared about declaring them openly.

"Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings were conducted in the principal city in a particular State in India. On the first day of the meeting, the Chief Minister of that State was to come to preside over and inaugurate the meeting. Before going to the meeting, when I was praying in my room, the Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, gave me a word of prophecy. That was this: "The Chief Minister who is going to preside over the meeting today has done many beneficial things to the people. So I am going to take him from the State level to the Central Government; I am going to lift him up and put him in the national mainstream." I was indeed surprised with this word of prophecy.

When I went to the meeting, he came. When I was introduced to him, he embraced me with great love and treated me as if I had been a friend to him for a long time. It was quite surprising to me. When the meeting began, the people gave him a rousing welcome. High officials also had come to attend the meeting.

After the welcome given to him, he delivered his presidential speech. Then when I stood up and referred to what the Lord had revealed to me, the whole gathering of people were excited and clapped their hands in an unending manner. Next day, all Newspapers published this account of the prophecy, with great enthusiasm. Very soon he joined the Central Government and was given a status, next to the Prime Minister.

However, it was the gift of faith which gave me the undaunting courage to declare such a very important prophecy in front of such a huge audience!

Yes! When this gift collaborates with the other "Gifts" in action, the other "Gifts" receive a new glamour, as it were. Let us pray with tears, that God Himself may grant us this sweet gift of faith, which illuminates the other "Gifts" in our ministries and private lives!

8. The Gifts of Healings!

Biblical reference: I Corinthians 12:9

The origin or source of the gifts of healings is the Almighty God Himself. He has graciously said, "I am the Lord who heals you", in Exodus 15:26. It is quite surprisingly thought - provoking to note the circumstances in which He said so.

When He had redeemed the multitudes of Israelites from bondage in Egypt, and was leading them towards the 'Promised Land', Canaan, the land of milk and honey, under the leadership of Moses, they found no water to drink in the wilderness for three continuous days. At last they found a stream at Marah, but the water was bitter; they began to murmur against Moses. In this situation, God, without getting wrathful, took compassion on them. He must have wondered that if the people were not able to withstand this difficult situation in which they had to drink bitter water, how would they face any sickness which would make life very bitter! That is why He, the God of compassion, gave this promise 'I am the Lord who heals you'.

Yes! Disease is bitter. In Isaiah 38:17 King Hezekiah, who walked before God, 'in truth and with a loyal heart', was sick and near death. He wept bitterly, lamenting, "indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness." God heard his lament and gave this promise to him with compassion:

"...I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; and I will add to your days fifteen years" (Is. 38:5)

Moreover, God has revealed His will regarding diseases quite lucidly and specifically in the following Biblical verses:

"So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you" (Ex.23:25)

"And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you" (Deut.7:15)

In the United States of America, there is a doctor nicknamed Dr. Death. He is called so, because he helps people, who, afflicted with incurable diseases come to an ultimate decision that it is better to end their lives, to kill themselves, through easy means. He justifies his actions, adducing the reason, quite

well-intentioned, according to him, that he is paving the way for desperate people tortured by incurable diseases to release themselves from their agonizing physical and mental pain, through an easy death. Instead, our compassionate God shows His mercy by healing people, suffering from diseases, and making them live a complete life.

This compassionate God, who was manifested in the flesh, came into the world in the name of Jesus and walked upon this earth (Matt.1:23; I Tim.3:16; Rom.9:5; I John 5:20; John 10:30; 14:9). The Bible describes His ministry on the earth in Matthew 9:35 and 4:23; these verses bear a glorious witness to the fact that Jesus went about all cities and villages, 'teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing all kinds of sicknesses and diseases among the people'. Was not His compassion the sole reason for this! He took compassion and healed the people who passed through the bitter experience of a sickbed. Matthew 14:14 says that, on seeing a great multitude, Jesus was moved with compassion, and healed the sick among them. Matthew 20:34 testifies that Jesus had compassion on two blind men, who cried out to Him, touched their eyes and restored their sight. He, moved with compassion, touched and cleansed the leper when he implored Jesus, kneeling down to Him, and pleading with Him for help (Mark 1:40-42). An account of His ministry has been summed up in a nutshell, in the following verse:

"...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38)

A gifted servant of God participated once in the service at the church of the well known pastor, Rev. John Osteen of Houston in the U.S.A. An important part of the service is, when the pastor's wife invites those who are suffering from any disease to come forward and prompts the whole congregation to pray for them. On that particular day, when diseased people were coming to the front, the Lord opened the spiritual eyes of the servant of God and what he saw thrilled his heart. He was pleasantly surprised to see two angels escorting the sick people when they came forward for prayers and also when they returned to their seats. Our gracious Lord Jesus, who was standing near the servant of God told him, "Of all the ministries carried out in this church, this is the most pleasing one and closest to My heart, and it gives Me great joy."

It is the undisputed view of the Biblical scholars that one third of the time of His earthly ministry was devoted to the healing of the sick.

Today, the place of Jesus Christ on this earth, has been filled by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,17). Our loving Lord Jesus has given the Holy Spirit another name, "Comforter", just to point out the fact that He comforts us, like Jesus Christ Himself. The Holy Spirit too, is in fact, a part and parcel of the invisible God Himself. The following Biblical verse expounds this inscrutable "truth, lucidly:

"...the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor.3:17)

The Spirit of the Lord is called, the 'Spirit of grace' (Heb.10:29; Zech.12:10). He pours the love and compassion of God into our hearts (Rom. 5:5). So when the Holy Spirit overwhelms the life of somebody it is quite natural that God's love and compassion dart towards the sick people, from that man of God.

Look at St. Paul! He describes his experience with God's compassion thus:

"... the love of Christ constrains us..." (II Cor.5:14)

That is exactly why countless people received a wonderful and miraculous healing through his ministry. This fact is testified by the following Biblical verses:

"Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands"

(Acts 14:3) "So that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his (St. Paul's) body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them"

(Acts 19:12)

Jack Coe of the United States of America was one of the men of God used mightily in the unique ministry of healing the sick through intercessory prayers. In the early days, he had served the army. In the Second World War, once, many American soldiers were wounded during the Japanese air bombardment on Pearl Harbour and were brought to the States by ship. Jack Coe was looking on, when the wounded soldiers trooped down from the ship to the land.

One soldier had both his eyes bandaged, as they were badly damaged by the flying pieces of the shell; as soon as his feet touched the land, he fell on his face and kissed the ground

shouting, "I have come back to America." In the same way each handicapped soldier came down, one by one, from the ship with emotional outbursts. When Jack Coe saw their agony, his heart was broken, and he turned towards Jesus. The Lord also, with compassion, filled him with His Spirit immeasurably. A divine compassion took hold of him; countless people were healed by his prayers and tears.

My dear ones! The God of Trinity, is full of compassion (Ps.86:15;111:4;116:5,145:8). At all times - at the old Testament times, when God was involved with the people directly and at the time when He manifested Himself in flesh as Jesus Christ, the Son of God and walked upon this earth and at the present time when He moves among us as the Holy Spirit, it has been established that it is only the compassion that flows **from Him which perennially prompts Him to heal the people. Showering His gifts of healings on the hearts of His servants, He fills them with compassion and induces them to heal countless people all over the world.**

Significance of the Plural Form Gifts!

The Biblical verses I Corinthians 12:8-10, speak of the nine "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit. The Bible refers to all other "Gifts" in the singular except the one, pertaining to healing, which is termed the "Gifts of Healings". There may be many reasons for this. I am giving below the concepts put forward by a few servants of God involved in the healing ministry.

1. Diverse ways of operation!

We see different kinds of ways in which the gifts of healings functioned in the ministry of our gracious Lord Jesus. In Mark 1:42, the leper who was touched by Jesus Christ was healed instantly. Mark 8:23-25 tell us that another blind man was healed only when our Lord Jesus touched his eyes twice. In Luke 4:40 and Matthew 12:15, we find that Jesus Christ healed all the sick people who came to Him. The Bible says that when He came to Nazareth, where He grew up, He laid His hands on only a very few sick people' and healed them, as reported in Mark 6:5. Again, we read in John 5:1-9, among the great multitude of sick people pathetically lying down, 'waiting for the moving of the water' in the pool of Bethesda, the Lord Jesus healed only one sick man who had been lying there for 38 years. Yes! The same gift which healed countless people through our Lord Jesus Christ, on one occasion, was satisfied with healing just one man at another time. Perhaps that is why God might have called this healing power in a plural form, the gifts of healings; any way, it is beyond our understanding.

2. Healing methodology!

According to Luke 4:40, Jesus laid His hands on every one of the sick people and healed them. Mark 7:32-35 describe another healing miracle. They brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. Taking him aside from the multitude, Jesus put His fingers in his ears and He spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to Heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha." Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. In Mark 8:23-25 also, we see Him spitting on the eyes of another blind man, by which method, his eyesight was restored.

In John 9:6,7 to open the eyes of a man, blind from birth, 'He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He

anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay'. According to Mark 6:56, the sick 'were made well' when they touched the 'border of His garment'.

Yes! When the gifts of healings operate, various methods of healing are employed at various times. That is why, we have to wonder if the Holy Spirit called this power of healing as the gifts of healings. At this point, let us digress a little to meditate upon a wonderful truth.

a) Healing through spitting!

It would have been just enough for Jesus to touch the sick people to heal them. But why did He resort to the methodology of spitting, in the healing process? First let us consider the various reasons for Jesus Christ's coming upon the earth. One of the reasons is given in Matt.8:17,

"...He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses"

Does this verse not indicate that when He bears our sicknesses, He will have to bear the scorn and abuse accruing from the sickness? Job, who was struck with disgusting painful boils from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet, explains this gruesome experience:

"They abhor me, they keep far from me; they do not hesitate to spit in my face" (Job 30:10)

Isaiah 50:6 predicts that Jesus Christ the Son of God will also be despised in the same manner.

"I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting"

Another reason for His spitting may be-we do not know for certain-to indicate that He too, would have to undergo the shameful experience of abuse and spitting, while He would be carrying the burden of their sins and sicknesses on the cross.

Or perhaps He spat just to indicate that by bearing all the diseases of the sick people on Himself, He had integrated Himself with their sufferings.

Many years ago, a servant of God from India, visited Iraq with his whole family. They stayed in the house of a native of that country. The kind hearted hosts treated the members of the Indian family as members of their own family, with great affection. While dining, the members of the Iraqi family would drink water from the same tumbler, according to their tradition and so the Indian family too had to use that very same

tumbler. They would share the food, transferring it from one plate to another, using their food-soiled hands, without any inhibition. To the Indian family, it was a new experience, but they did not feel any kind of repulsion while drinking from the selfsame saliva-stained tumbler. There was no feeling of disgust, because the hosts were overflowing with love.

Once, I had been to South Africa; there, I met an aged pastor, called Abel. He had accepted Jesus through the ministry of a world renowned man of God, Pastor J.F. Rowlands. The pastor Abel narrated to me how he first tasted the love of God. He said, "I was a confirmed drunkard, and a very uncontrollable savage man. As such, I heard of Pastor Rowlands. On coming to know that he was reclaiming people from their drinking and other evil habits and directing them towards Jesus, a hot fury rose within me, without my own knowledge. I simply planned to kill him. With that intention, I wrote to him, "Please visit my house and pray for me." But I did not expect that he would come.

Surprisingly I received a reply from him, stating, "I will definitely come to your house", and fixing an appointment date and time. I had bought and kept some plantains only, for him. My sole plan was to kill him! Just at the appointed time, he entered my house with a smiling face; he shook hands with me and sat down. Slowly I handed over the fruit tray to him; he took just one plantain, peeled it, and extending it towards my mouth, asked me to have a bite first. I tried to excuse myself saying that I had not brushed my teeth. But he insisted, "It is all right; just have a small bite." With no other alternative, I took a bite. Next minute, he ate the remainder of the fruit, without any disgust, relishing it all the while. To my heart of flint, which was totally unaware of what 'love' is, this was a new experience. My heart was shattered within me, witnessing the love of that man of God. I began to wonder, if this gentleman is so loving, what will Jesus, who is within this man, be like? I surrendered my heart to Jesus!"

My dear ones! True! We do not know if Jesus spat while making people whole, just to prove that He is the Lord God who shares our grief and pain, caused by our diseases. However, when we read in Revelation 3:20 and John 14:23, that Jesus Christ longs to come into our homes and abide with us, aren't our hearts thrilled? When we ponder over this desire of Christ, we can guess the true dimension of His love. Can't we also understand why He spat? Well, after this digression, we

will go back to our meditation on the main theme: 'God's power of healing.'

b) Healing through life within God!

It is the Lord who gives the people 'life, breath'; He gives breath to the people (Acts 17:25; Is.42:5). John 5:26 says that God has 'life in Himself'; when the life within Him flows through the body of a man, it is no wonder that it heals him.

In Heaven, in His presence, there is bound to be this healing power. When the angel coming straight from the presence of God stirred up the water in the pool Bethesda, the whole water would be filled with the healing power of God, and 'whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water was made well' (John 5:4). The reason is that the healing power in the life or 'nucleus' within God, which is in His presence, invests the angel too, with this healing power. When the angel, charged with this healing power comes down from God's presence and touches the water, the water too is charged with the healing power. This is something like a natural phenomenon.

Once I had been to a factory, where sandalwood oil is extracted from sandalwood. The people there explained to me, in detail, how the fragrant oil is extracted. After about an hour, I returned to my office. That was all! All the people in my working place crowded into my room inhaling the sweet odour wafting in the air and commenting, "What a pleasant smell! Sandalwood smell! Where does it come from?" They relished taking deep breaths of the scented air. See! After just an hour spent in that sandalwood oil producing factory, such a sweet odour had come upon me.

If so, won't the angel, standing forever in the sweet presence of the Lord be 'invested' or 'smeared' with the Lord's life - power of healing? Is it any surprise?

The Bible declares that in Heaven there is a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Rev.22:1,2).

Yes! The life that emanates from God brings into the water the power of healing; the leaves of the tree of life bring the power of offering health. In the days of the prophet Moses the same Lord commanded him, "Let them make Me a sanctuary,

that I may dwell among them" (Ex.25:8; 29:45). With His tabernacle established amidst the tents of the Israelites, He was walking in the midst of their camp (Deut.23:14). So the whole wilderness was filled with His healing power. That is why Psalm 105:37 says, "There was none feeble among His tribes."

c) Healing through the word of God!

Psalm 107:20 testifies:

"He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions"

Yes! There is 'life' or 'breath' within God, the Father. That life is revealed in His 'word', too. That 'word' emanating from the 'life' brings perfect health to the people.

d) Healing through Jesus; the human form of God!

This 'invisible' God (Heb. 11:27), came down to the earth, taking the form of a human being, called "Jesus". John 1:4,7 affirm, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of man". Yes! When He was walking on this earth, the same healing power that is in the presence of the Lord in Heaven was manifested also in Him.

Many instances in the Bible confirm this truth.

e) Healing abounds in Jesus' person!

When we read the Biblical verses Luke 5:17 and 6:19, we find that the healing power of God always surrounded the Lord Jesus, wherever He went. As witnessed by Mark 6:56, there was a conspicuously miraculous healing power even in the border of His garment and as many as touched Him were made well.

Again, consider John 4:48-53. To the noble man who invited Jesus to come down to Capernaum to heal his son, who was at the point of death, Jesus simply said, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed His word and went his way. Before reaching his home, on the way, he received news that his son recovered exactly at the same moment when Jesus had spoken the 'word'. Yes! The mere words of Jesus Christ had the potentiality to heal the sick.

According to Luke 4:40, when people, sick with various diseases, were brought to Him, He laid His hands on everyone of them and healed them. Yes! The power of healing flooded through His hands to make people whole.

f) Healing through the Holy Spirit!

When we have a close look at the lives of the apostles, their ministry had the same power of healing as that of our Saviour

Jesus Christ. We see quite clearly and precisely that in the lives of the apostles too, God's power of healing burst into the people as in the days of Christ. Please read Acts 5:15. People brought the sick out into the streets so that at least the shadow of Peter, passing by, might fall on them and heal them. Yes! The healing power of the invisible God enveloping Peter flowed through his shadow and healed the sick, according to their faith.

I know a servant of God who was engaged in His ministry, along with a secular job in a Bank. The Lord had granted him the gifts of healings. One day when he was working in his office, reports that one of his friends had been suffering severely from a viral fever for several days reached him. Stopping his work for a brief while, he rushed immediately to see him. As soon as he entered into his sick friend's room, the latter got up from his bed and sat up. Both friends were chatting about various interesting matters, for sometime. Then, the servant of God prayed with compassion for his friend. When he was going out to catch a bus back to his office, he was shocked to find that his friend too was trying to go along with him, to see him off. He told him, "Lie down and take rest; please don't walk." But his friend laughed and said, "The moment you stepped into my room, some strange power hit my body. At that moment, I was healed completely; just touch my body and see how cool it is!"

Yes! Even at the present time, God's power of healing always hovers around a servant of God filled with the gifts of healings through the Holy Spirit. Acts 19:12 vouches that, when handkerchiefs and aprons from St. Paul's person were placed on the sick people, they were miraculously healed.

Several years ago, in Delhi, the capital city of India, there was a Bishop of the Church of North India (C.N.I.), called Eric Nasser. In 1979, special Gospel meetings were conducted in the Cathedral at Delhi. The Bishop was deeply touched by the divine presence in those meetings. So he invited the same servant of God, who preached in those meetings, to give the sermon in the Sunday morning worship in the Cathedral. When the servant of God came for the morning service, the Bishop embraced him and held him to his bosom for several minutes. The servant of God shed tears of joy, on seeing the Bishop's love and affection.

Months rolled away! Again the servant of God happened to meet the Bishop. At that time, the Bishop narrated a wonderful event. He said, "Brother, you may remember that I embraced

you tightly when you came to preach in my Cathedral, several months back. There was a reason for my action. Formerly I served the Lord as a pastor in a church at Ajmer. There, in a particular family, every year on a particular day, the housewife of the family would be possessed by a demon. She would turn violently ferocious on that day; nobody could approach her and the whole house would become a hell for a month. During those days, I used to go there and pray for her. I was the only person to whom she would not do any harm. However, I had to leave the city, but the burden regarding that family was always grieving my heart.

That day when I embraced you, I kept my handkerchief pressed against your back tightly, while praying with tears, that the healing power of God reflected through your gifts of healings should flow into the handkerchief. Then I sent that handkerchief to the family instructing them in a letter to pin that handkerchief onto her dress prior to the day when the possession would begin. They did so. That day came! But nothing abnormal happened! Till today, since then, that sister is quite healthy. That family, too, is living in Christ happily."

Yes! How real is the Biblical verse "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor.3:17).

g) Healing through apostles' words!

The Bible demonstrates that through the 'word' of the apostles too, the healing power of God was manifested. On seeing Aeneas, paralyzed and bedridden eight years, Peter said to him, "Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed" (Acts 9:33,34). The paralyzed man arose immediately. Again in Acts 14:10 we see how St. Paul's word healed the sick. St. Paul told the crippled man, who had never walked, with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" The crippled leaped up and walked.

In Madras, the "Jesus Calls" Prayer Tower functions all the 24 hours of the day. One day a gentle man from Germany, Dr. Wilson by name contacted the prayer warriors there and said, "My son slipped and fell down, dashing his face heavily against the edge of an iron table. His face has been damaged beyond recognition. When we took him to our family doctor, he advised us, "Please take him to a Government Hospital, because there is nothing I can do; there are wounds all over the face and on his eyes too!" We don't know what to do. We are worried about his life. Will you please pray for him?"

On hearing these words, the lady prayer warrior's heart was

moved with compassion. After praying with tears, the lady was filled with the power of the Spirit of God. She told the father, "Sir, don't worry! Your son will be certainly healed. There will be no danger to his life at all." After receiving this word of God, they took the boy to the Government Hospital again. The doctors, examining the boy one after another, said, "Nothing can be done!" Finally, for the eye test, he was taken to the Ophthalmologist. Even as the doctor was examining his eyes, the power of God descended upon the boy. After testing the eyes, the doctor said, "I am greatly surprised; there is no defect in both the eyes; no fracture in the facial bones, too. I'll bandage a minor wound in the face. You can take your son back home!" He is well even today!

h) Healing through laying hands!

"...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover"
(Mark 16:18)

How true is the word of our gracious Lord Jesus quoted above! Consider St. Paul. His path of life was a rough and tough one. After a tempest-tossed ship journey, while being taken captive to Caesar in Italy he and his fellow prisoners along with the Roman centurion and his soldiers escaped to the shores of Malta, swimming or floating on boards or on the broken pieces of the ship. They had to stay in Malta for three days when they were taken good care of by Publius, a leading citizen of the island. When St. Paul saw that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery, he prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him (Acts 28:8).

One of my friends who had a close contact with Dr. A. B. Simpson, a man of God adorned with the gifts of healings narrated to me an incident in his life. Dr. Simpson, once, visited New Zealand; a friend was waiting to receive him as he got down from the ship. With the intention of shaking hands with him, Dr. Simpson extended his hand.

But that friend, unable to shake hands with him, sadly said, "Alas! I cannot stretch my hand, as it is bandaged heavily due to a bad fracture sustained in an accident." On hearing these words, Dr. Simpson's heart was moved with compassion. Involuntarily he held the fractured hand and shed tears. Our Lord Jesus Christ saw his tears born out of compassion. He made His power descend on that hand, through the gifts of healings operating in Dr. Simpson. Immediately the broken bones, producing a crackling sound, were made whole. The man received his healing in an instant!

Yes! When the men of God filled with the gifts of healings touch us, even unintentionally at times, the healing power of God descends on our disease-ridden body and heals us in a miraculous manner.

Just as the healing power of God flowed to the people through the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, His garments, His words and His tender hands, even today, the gifts of healings act through His servants filled with the Holy Spirit and heal the disease-afflicted people.

The Reasons Why God Heals People!

1. Faithful to His promises!

The Lord has given an assurance to mankind in Jeremiah 1:12: "I am ready to perform My word." He is always careful about fulfilling His word mentioned earlier in Exodus 15:26: "I am the Lord who heals you."

Once a young woman brought her husband to me for prayers, as her husband was in a depression, just a few days after their marriage. On seeing her, I was moved with compassion. I prayed for her husband with compassionate tears. Do you know what she said afterwards! Looking at her husband she said, "I have given my promise in the church that I will always be with you, in prosperity and calamity. So I will never forsake you."

Yes! In the same way, the Lord heals the people even today in order to honour and fulfil His promise, "I am the Lord who heals you."

2. Confirmation of the word preached by His servants!

The Lord heals the people confirming the word given by His servants also. Mark 16:20 illustrates this truth:

"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs"

There are two types of people in this world. The conviction about deep spiritual truths regarding our Lord Jesus Christ draws one kind of people to the Lord. The other type of people can be attracted and drawn towards the Lord only by signs and wonders (I Cor. 1:22). That, signs and wonders draw many people to Jesus Christ, is confirmed by Acts 8:5-8.

Once a Gospel meeting was organised in a certain city in India. First, they held a cracker display in the venue bursting a variety of crackers, at a huge expense. Curious people thronged there in vast numbers. This paved the way for preaching the Gospel to them later. The miracles performed on the diseased people is similar to this phenomenon (John 6:1,2). The miracles draw large crowds of people to listen to the Good News.

3. His compassion!

"...He who has seen Me has seen the Father..."

This is what Jesus uttered in John 14:9. We read again and again in the Bible, that whenever Jesus healed the sick people, "He was moved with compassion" (Matt. 14:14; 20:34; Mark 1:40-42).

I am reminded of an event that took place in a certain city in the United States of America, 10 years back. A small boy was playing around, picking flowers in a garden near his home. Behind him was a poisonous rattle snake, ready to strike at the boy. Not being aware of the impending danger, the boy was completely absorbed in his play. A passerby who came that way, saw this horrible sight; he stood motionless like a statue, not knowing what to do. If he called out to the boy to warn him, the boy might just run into the snake. So without hesitating any more, he threw himself in between the boy and the snake. The infuriated snake stung the man many times before fleeing.

On hearing his screams, the people nearby rushed him to the hospital. After fighting for life for several weeks, he got well again. I used to visualize in my mind what the boy, after growing up, would have told the man, if he had a chance of looking at the marks of the snake bite all over this man's body. He would have definitely said, "Sir, to save my life, you came forward to sacrifice your life. Didn't you receive these wounds for my sake?"

Yes! This is exactly the Good News we preach today. Jesus had compassion on those who were sick and 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses on His body' (Matt.8:17). 'By His stripes we are healed' (Is.53:5).

Causes for Diseases!

Though there might be various causes for sicknesses, the deep compassion of Jesus Christ shatters all those causes and heals us ultimately. So we need not bother about the causes of sicknesses, when the gifts of healings are in action.

Causes	Compassion of Jesus
1. Sin Psalm 38:3,5,7	Matthew 9:2,6
2. Germs (causing disease) Isaiah 54:16	Matthew 4:23; 9:35
3. Breaking the laws of Nature Psalm 104:20-23	Psalm 107:17,19
4. Overworking without rest Proverbs.11:17; Psalm 38:5	Psalm 30:2
5. The devil and demonic powers Job 2:7	Luke 13:11-13

"... *Mercy triumphs over judgement*" (James 2:13)

According to this verse, when the servants of God, filled with the compassion of Christ, pray for others, whatever be the cause of their particular sickness, the compassion of Christ covers and overpowers that cause and brings healing to the people.

Does not the Bible say emphatically, "Love covers all sins?" (Prov. 10:12, 1 Pet. 4:8).

I feel that it would be better for us to meditate, at this juncture, upon some essential aspects, we perceive in the lives of those who are involved in the ministry of praying for the sick, filled with the gifts of healings, generally.

1. Authority in their words!

Definitely, the servants of God will have a divine authority in their words and sermons because, they have been described by

the Scriptures as follows:

Vessels for honour sanctified and useful for the Master! (II Tim.2:21)

Ambassadors for Christ! (II Cor.5:20)

Cod's fellow workers! (1 Cor.3:9)

People chosen for performing mighty deeds!

(Mark 16:18; John 14:12)

People called to be like the resurrected Jesus!

(I John 4:17; Ps.82:6; John 10:34,35)

So, a divine authority will be manifested in their word and sermons.

2. Full of the Spirit, presence and anointing of the Lord!

The servants of God will be filled with the Spirit of the Lord (II Cor.3:17,18). They will have the presence of God all around them; and they will have on them the anointing of the Spirit of God.

To explain this, let me remind you of a certain event mentioned by Smith Wigglesworth.

A pastor had invited a preacher from Russia to share the word of God in his church, one day. The church service had begun, but the preacher was yet to come. The pastor, who was a little worried, sent his daughter to fetch the preacher. She came back running and told her father, "Daddy, he is crying out, I will not go; no, I will not go" from within his room." The pastor began to feel helpless; but, abruptly, the preacher entered the church. He marched straight to the pulpit and commenced his message; the power of God and anointing descended upon the people in an abundant measure. The service was over; as they were returning, the pastor gently asked the preacher why he cried loudly to his daughter, "I will not go." The preacher, with a tender smile, enlightened the pastor, saying, "Woe! I did not tell her so. I was only battling with God, saying, I will not go unless You give me a fresh anointment."

Yes! The people who are involved in the ministry of healing bringing relief to the sick, will be overwhelmingly filled with the Holy Spirit and God's presence.

3. Words that inspire faith!

The words of the servants of God engaged in this exalted

ministry of healing will abound in faith.

Romans 10:17 asserts that faith comes 'by the word of God'. So these men of God will remind us of God's promises to us and build up our faith. Particularly, they will totally believe the word, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). With the complete faith that Jesus will bring healing even today, they will only speak words of faith.

A friend, well known to me, was afflicted by a constant headache, all the 24 hours of the day; all medical treatments proved futile. He was experiencing the pains of hell. Once he had the good fortune of attending the healing services conducted by the man of God, William Branham from the United States of America, in Bombay, North India. The words of faith and authority that proceeded out of the mouth of Branham pierced his heart. A kind of new faith came into him, when he saw all around, people getting healed from their sickness and released from the grip of demons. This stirred up a strong faith within him and threw away his medicines for his headache, saying, "Lord, You can heal me too! Please heal me!" He was healed instantaneously.

4. Testimonies!

The servants of the Lord engaged in the healing ministry would urge the people, who were healed in such meetings, to share their testimonies with others (Ps. 105:1,2; Mark 5:19,20). Because these testimonies will bring honour and glory to our Lord and inspire faith in the other people, who attend these meetings for the first time and hence are totally ignorant of the power of Christ to heal.

Several years ago, I was doing the Lord's ministry in a little town, while engaged in a secular job too. A Christian friend in that town, always causing obstructions to my ministry, was shattering my heart. Still I loved him and his family, and was praying for them. One day, the only daughter of that man, suddenly took ill and she stopped breathing. That man, falling on her body cried bitterly, "O my daughter, where have you gone?" He was totally broken-hearted and was wailing. After sometime, suddenly the "dead" girl opened her eyes and sat up on her bed. The father was hilariously happy, ran and embraced her and started questioning her.

What the girl narrated to him startled him: "Daddy, I was happy, looking at the Lord Jesus in Heaven. At that time, all of a

sudden, I heard the voice of Uncle Dhinakaran who prays and preaches everywhere. He was saying, 'Oh, Lord Jesus! Please send her back!' Then Jesus told me with a smile, 'My daughter, go back. My son Dhinakaran is asking me to send you back.' That is why, I have come back, daddy." That day, that man turned towards God and accepted Him. He shared his testimony from this experience, with tears of remorse with thousands of people in a Good News Meeting at Madurai, a city in South India.

Yes! It is a part of a prophet's ministry to plead for those in distress, and even for those who insult and humiliate him.

5. God's power transmitted through him!

Deuteronomy 34:10-12 proclaim that the Lord protected, and gave succour to the people by performing signs and wonders through Moses, the prophet.

The greatest force on earth is the compassion of our gracious Lord Jesus Christ.

A world renowned man of God was the pastor of a church in a particular city. Once, all of a sudden that city was afflicted with an outbreak of Plague, which killed many in his church. One day the pastor closed the doors of the church and from within the church he cried out to the Lord, "Lord, am I here to bury my congregation?" At that time his eyes fell on the Biblical verse, Acts.10:38: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil."

This word touched his heart. At that time, somebody knocked at the door. Opening the door, he saw a small boy standing there. The boy said with tears, "Pastor, my sister is at the point of death. Please come over and offer a final prayer for her." A divine compassion overflowed in the pastor's heart. He rushed to the boy's house, prayed for the girl, with tears and rebuked the Plague. Immediately, the girl was revived to life. In the name of Jesus, he prayed with compassion for all his congregation, afflicted by the disease, and brought them back to life. No one died of that disease thereafter.

True! The ornament of a true servant of God endowed with the gifts of healings is Christ's love and compassion, found within him.

6. Glory to God!

The servants of God, who are involved in the lofty ministry of healing will always be glorifying God and they will be inspiring others also to glorify Him. According to Isaiah 43:21, all God expects from us is 'Praise'. The servants of God will keep on reminding the people to give 'Praise' to the Lord. As people keep on showering praises on God, the Lord who inhabits the praises (Ps.22:3) will come down and perform miracles.

Recently, I had the privilege of participating in a meeting conducted by the world renowned servant of God, Pastor Benny Hinn in Madras, India. From the beginning to the final prayer, he keeps on enthusing the people and prompting them to continue singing in praise of God. I felt the presence of God overflowing amidst the very huge crowd of people; I saw it!

Questions Pertaining to the Gifts of Healings!

1. Why don't all the people get healed while participating in prayer meetings of the servants of God filled with the gifts of healings?

It is very difficult to answer this question. We can even say that it is a mystery. According to the Biblical verses Matthew 18:14, I Timothy 2:4 and Titus 2:11, it is not the will of God that any one should live in sin, without receiving the grace of God that brings salvation; and it is not the will of God that people should perish in hell. But the whole lot of people who participate in the Gospel meetings conducted all over the world do not receive salvation or repentance. When discussing this point Jesus Christ said,

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

And He (Jesus) said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father'"
(John 6:44,65)

In the same way, as mentioned in Matthew 12:15 our gracious Lord healed them all who came to Him; but in His own country, because of the scepticism of His own people, "He could do no mighty work, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them" (Mark 6:5).

When He went to the pool of Bethesda, among the great multitude of sick people lying there, He healed only one man (John 5:1-9). He gave an explanation for this in the following words:

"And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian"
(Luke 4:27)

So, it is impossible to delve into this question deeply and find a clear answer. It is a mystery!

Once the same question was posed to Kathryn Kuhlman, a lady mightily used by the Lord to bring physical healing, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Her reply was: "When I go to Heaven, the first question I am going to ask the Lord will be: 'Why don't You heal all people?'"

However, in whatever meeting, we, the servants of the Lord, filled with the gifts of healings, preach or pray, we should minister with the great expectation that every one attending

the meeting should be saved and healed. At the same time, we should not feel depressed because some people are not healed.

2. Is medication contrary to Biblical truths?

In Matthew 8:13, Jesus has said, "As you have believed, so let it be done for you." Likewise, this concerns the individual faith of the individual person.

I know very well a respectable man of God, Pastor S. P. Daniel, founder of the Pentecostal Church of India, Palayamkottai in South India and the respected Pastor G. Sundaram, the founder of the Apostolic Christian Church, Madras in South India. Once Pastor Daniel had cataract in both his eyes, which almost blinded him. Still he took no medicine at all; he never consented to eye surgery, despite medical advice by many doctors. He was having complete faith in God. One day as he was going to do God's work in a place, the pain in the eyes became intolerable. In a fit of anger, he prayed to God, in an authoritative manner: "Lord, how much do I suffer? How can You be silent? Please heal me immediately." At once tears started flowing out of his eyes, like a flood and his cataract vanished. For many years he lived with perfect eyesight and did a glorious ministry.

Similarly Pastor Sundaram suffered from a kidney disease for many weeks, continuously. Though he became unconscious, no medical treatment was given him, as he had desired; only prayers of intercession were offered. He was in a coma for several weeks. Suddenly, one day, he regained his consciousness and he had been healed entirely. For many years he did the Lord's ministry with perfect health till the Lord took him to Heaven.

The faith of these two men of God was firm and deep rooted; they were people who walked with God.

At the same time, there are quite a lot of people who have a feeble and fragile faith; they go to the doctors, believing the following words of God.

".... Those who are well do not need a physician, hut those who are sick" (Luke 5:31)

Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?" (Jer.8:22)

There are people who, because of unceasing pain in their stomach, take the advice of St. Paul to Timothy as a guidance

for themselves (1 Tim.5:23).

When King Hezekiah, at the very point of death prayed with bitter tears, the Lord promised to add fifteen more years to his life, through prophet Isaiah.

Even after this promise from God, prophet Isaiah gave the following advice to the king:

"... Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover" (Is. 38:21)

So the Lord does not despise those who use medicines also.

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things" (Rom.14:1)

According to this word of God, the merciful Lord guides even those people, supporting them. So, I think it will be prudent for us not to criticize both opposing groups.

3. Is faith within the hearts of the sick people a vital criterion for the gifts of healings to work on them?

The father of a young boy tormented by a mute spirit night and day, from childhood, requested Jesus to have compassion on him and help him. Jesus replied,

"...If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23)

Yes! Jesus expected faith from him. But when he cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief", Jesus had compassion on him and healed his son (Mark 9:23-27).

In John 4:48, we find quite a contradictory situation. A nobleman came to Jesus imploring him to come down to his house in Capernaum and heal his son who was at the point of death. Jesus said at that time:

"...Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe" (John 4:48)

Then He performed a miracle and made that king's man and his whole household believe Him.

Yes! The Lord is full of compassion (Ps. 86:15). When we have 'unbelief' even after trying to believe, He does take pity on us, and helps us to conquer our unbelief.

My mother languished, suffering from epileptic fits for several years. When suddenly the attack came, her jaws would close up firmly, one against the other. Sometimes her tongue would get entangled between the jaws; blood would flow from her trapped, wounded tongue profusely. Though many men of God prayed for her, she was not healed. The wound in her

tongue would take at least two weeks to heal, during which time she won't be able to eat at all. After this period, when she was trying to eat again, the fits would attack. The same old tale again! Sometimes, we would try to get her tongue released from her locked jaws with harrowing difficulty. We used to shed tears of blood at those times. One day, when the fits came and her tongue was caught between the jaws, blood flowed. My father was not able to withstand that sight; he cried out in a fit of desperation, "O Lord! Is the precious blood You shed on the cross not enough? Should my wife, too, shed her blood like this? Have mercy on us." Jesus heard my father's cry. From that day, the problem came to an end.

"For whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11)

As promised by this word, our Lord Jesus Christ will certainly show mercy on those who readily admit that they don't have faith at all and those who plead for His mercy lamenting their lack of faith.

It is better that the servants of God who, filled with the gifts of healings are engaged in the Lord's ministry, bear in mind one important point.

God never expects us to tell a man, languishing in pain, while at the point of death, "If you can believe, all things are possible." How can people, tormented by pain demonstrate their faith? To understand this kind of situation, let us consider an excellent example given in Acts 28:8:

"And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him" (Acts 28:8)

When the father of the leading citizen of the island Malta, who knew nothing of Jesus, was at the point of death, affected by a severe disease, what did St. Paul do? As the Bible testifies, he was moved with compassion for the old man; using his own faith, St. Paul laid his hands on him, prayed for him and healed him.

Yes! What brought him healing was St. Paul's faith. So when we pray for others, let us follow the command of Jesus as expressed in Matthew 10:8:

"....Freely you have received, freely give"

Fixing firmly in our mind the truth that healing people is God's will, let us make use of our own faith and shed tears for them. Then our ministry will flourish in all directions, emitting

a sweet fragrance, as it were.

4. Why do gifted men of God fall ill?'

a) Temptation common to man!

Please read Ecclesiastes 9:2,3. The quintessence of this Biblical passage is that trials and tribulations are common to all:

"Everything occurs alike to all..."

This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing happens to all..."

Jesus warned us before leaving this earth: "In the world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33). I Corinthians 10:13 emphasizes that all temptations are common to man and affect the servants of God, too. We should be well aware that the servants of God are also human. It is quite a natural phenomenon that poisonous germs which infect all flesh afflict them, too, demobilizing them with weakness and disease.

In South Africa, there was a man of God, by name, Pastor J. F. Rowlands. Countless people received miraculous healing through his prayers. The Lord established nearly 100 churches through his ministry. Once he fell ill and was hospitalised. The doctors could not diagnose his disease at all. Finally, what did they find out? To give immersion baptism to the people who came to him, customarily, he used to stand for hours together, barefooted, in a particular river; a type of small worm in the river had entered his leg and had poisoned his blood stream.

Yes! As long as we live in this world, diseases that afflict others will affect us too. Nevertheless, when we call upon God, He will definitely show His mercy to His servants, according to the following Biblical verses: *"For the LORD... will have compassion on His servants"* (Ps. 135:14)

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all" (Ps.34:19)

b) Ministry of hard labour!

In Philippians 2:25-30, St.Paul, while describing the humble ministry of a servant of God Epaphroditus, points out the reason for the sickness of Epaphroditus, at one point:

"Because for the work of Christ he came close to death..."
(Phil.2:30)

This servant of God, being St. Paul's brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, ministered to his need (Phil.2:25). He attended to all the day-to-day requirements of St. Paul, who

lived alone as a confirmed bachelor. In addition to this, he was always labouring fervently in prayers for the members of the church that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, as recorded is Colossians 4:12. Is there any surprise that his physical health deteriorated!

For the servants of God, who work for Him sincerely, where is the time to sleep or to dine at the appropriate times?

"...For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat" (Mark 6:31)

This is how, it is portrayed regarding Jesus and His disciples. Similarly the true servants of God have to labour hard, pressed by time. Sometimes, at night, when they kneel down to pray for others, they do not even realise how time slips by. The day would have dawned already.

On April 21,22 of 1994, in the city of Dallas (U.S.A.), in the meetings conducted by Pastor Benny Hinn, I had the rare privilege of sharing the dais with him, and listening to his sermon and watching the miracles that occurred, with my own eyes. One reference he made to Sister Kathryn Kuhlman in his sermon, touched my heart. Mightily used by the Lord in His healing ministry, she laboured so hard that she began to suffer from an enlarged heart. She continued her ministry not minding this affliction and of course people were getting healed. But she herself, because of such unceasing labour for Christ, grew weak and ultimately expired.

"...he who is cruel troubles his own flesh" (Prov. 11: 17)

Sometimes, as we observe with our own eyes, the workers for Christ toil ceaselessly to the extent of torturing their own flesh and falling ill ultimately. But still, as the pious King David affirmed in Psalm 31:15, "My times are in Your hand; the times of every one of the servants of God are in the hands of his Master, Jesus Christ. Whatever sickness grips him, he cannot be snatched away from this world without His permission, before the time appointed for him to die.

c) Thorn in the flesh!

"And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure" (II Cor. 12:7)

As explained by this Biblical verse, St. Paul terms the weakness in his body as a 'thorn'; he refers to the same weakness in Galatians 4:14 as 'my trial in my flesh'. II Corinthians 1.0:10, alluding to this weakness, mentions that,

"his bodily presence is weak". In

I Corinthians 11:30; 12:5,10 Paul asserts: "If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity." Moreover St. Paul says,

".... God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27)

In the verse quoted above, Paul explains how God utilises His weak servants for His ministry.

When people engaged in secular jobs become very weak due to some disease, the institution that employs them, throws them away. But the son of God, Jesus is so merciful and broad hearted that He will never forsake His servants, who become physically weak; He uses them till the very end of their lives.

There is also another secret in this. St. Paul explains his physical tribulations, with a touch of mystery, in Colossians 1:24:

"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church"

In Galatians 6:17, he gives a wonderful testimony regarding himself, hinting at the secret:

"From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"

Our merciful Lord Jesus stipulated this condition to His disciples in Luke 9:23, saying,

"...If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me"

It is not surprising that those who follow Jesus in His path of the cross, should also participate in His sufferings on that path. St. Paul's statement, "I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ", is an incomprehensible secret mystery. But still, this happens in the lives of many servants of God.

I know a young man who was consistently and ceaselessly doing the Lord's ministry while engaged in his secular profession too. During the day, he would work hard in his office. Later on, he would be absorbed in the labour of His ministry in various ways. Sometimes, until 2 a.m. in the night, after finishing the prayer meetings he would be praying for the sick people who came to him individually. For him, to breathe is to labour for Christ's ministry. Such sessions would go on till the early hours of the following day. Alas! All of a sudden, both

his lungs were damaged. He began to vomit blood. His heart was broken. Months lapsed! He became gaunt and skinny. One day, with a broken heart, he told his loving wife, "I will die in a few days. But as I have been leading a faithful honest life, the Lord will protect you and our two children." So saying, with tears, he was preparing himself for the end.

But quite suddenly the Holy Spirit descended on him. The presence of the Lord Jesus filled his room. Jesus went to his bed and sat near him. He asked him, "Son, why are you weeping?" The young man whispered a reply: "Lord, I am unable to bear this pain." Then Jesus questioned him, "Did you not pray, 'Lord, give me Your power; I am prepared to undergo any tribulation for that?' Can't you bear this small physical suffering?" The young man, shedding tears profusely replied to Jesus: "Lord, it is true I prayed so. But I am entirely incapable of bearing this pain."

At this juncture, Jesus told him of two significant matters: "Firstly, My son, when you were doing the ministry mightily for My sake, many workers made friends with you and promised to stand by you in the face of all your tribulations. Where are they now? See, how they have disappeared. So you should know one thing. You should learn to live relying only on Me. Man is always human. You must give up trusting him.

Secondly, it is I who allowed you to pass through this valley of tears and agony. Unless you traverse the path of agony of cruel disease, you can never understand the sufferings, exactly as they really are, of My people all over the world. That is why, I allowed this sickbed to you. Nevertheless now, I will raise you up again; you will continue with My ministry." Just as He promised, He raised him up from his sickbed. Today as that servant of God recalls this miraculous event in his life, 26 years have lapsed. He is still doing his ministry mightily for the sake of the Lord!

Yes! At certain times the Lord permits diseases and weaknesses in the lives of His servants, to make them comprehend exalted spiritual truths and mysteries. However, let us not feel depressed by them.

"You (My Lord), who have shown me great and severe troubles, shall revive me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every

side" (Ps.71:20,21)

Along with the Psalmist, let us also hopefully offer the same prayer to our Lord. Let us praise Him for the gifts of healings He has bestowed in our hands, and continue steadfastly in the ministry of bringing divine healing to the people from His hands!

9. The Gift of the Working of Miracles!

Biblical Reference: I Corinthians 12:10

Definition of a Miracle!

A miracle is an act of the Almighty God, crossing all barriers of natural laws; it is a supernatural act. What happened to King Hezekiah is an example from the Bible. Let us study it! God has appointed a time for everything, according to Ecclesiastes 3:1,2. For every man, there is

"A time to be born, and a time to die..." (Eccl.3:2)

Nevertheless, the God fearing King Hezekiah 'was sick and near death.' After the doctors had given up, and prophet Isaiah had declared the word of God, "You shall die and not live", the king turned his face toward the wall and prayed to the Lord weeping bitterly. We find that the Lord added fifteen years to his days. This is a great miracle!

I know a mother whose eldest son was at the point of death because of a terrible lung disease. The doctors told the mother, "Madam, we have done whatever we can. Perhaps the congenial climate of a hill resort may mitigate this disease; if you take the small boy there, he may live. Or in case it rains and our town gets cooler, there may be a chance for his survival." The mother did not have the financial resources to take her son to a hill resort; there was also a nagging fear in her mind as to whether he would be alive until being taken there. Yet, she did something remarkable!

It was not a rainy season at all. She knelt on her knees and implored God, crying: "O Lord, please perform a miracle; help me by sending down rains; give my son a chance to live." The Lord listened to her pathetic plea! Even though there had been no sign of rain at all, it rained 'cats and dogs', the whole night; it was a heavy downpour which amazed all the people. That little boy survived. Well, now, this is a 'Miracle'!

The Source of Miracles!

The abode and source of miracles is the Almighty God Himself!

"Who does great things, and unsearchable, marvellous things without number" (Job 5:9; 9:10)

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" (Jer. 32:27)

"To Him who alone does great wonders" (Ps. 136:4) For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God" (Ps. 86:10)

The Biblical verses, quoted above, affirm the fact that the fountain source of all miracles is God, the Author of 'wondrous things'. He sent Moses to Egypt and enabled him to perform many miracles, with the only motive of changing the hard heart of Pharaoh and to exhibit His supernatural power. But, the magicians and sorcerers of Egypt were able to do the same wonders, using their magical skill. So Pharaoh did not bother much about the 'marvellous things' done by Moses or his words. Yet there was a particularly remarkable miracle, which could not be imitated by the sorcerers and magicians.

"Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger of God...'" (Ex. 8:19)

Yes! God alone has the might to perform miracles.

Several years ago the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, in India became seriously ill. Despite medical treatments, given day and night, there was no significant improvement in his condition. So a reputed Neuro Surgeon, Dr. Kanoo was brought from Japan. He observed closely all the medical procedures, for sometime, and then changed just one procedure. He altered the density of oxygen, being administered to the Chief Minister. That was all! Immediately he revived! For the people in the medical field, it was a miracle. Yet, this medical feat could be achieved only by Dr. Kanoo. Just so, true miracles can be performed by only one person, the Almighty God Himself.

The Bible asserts firmly and clearly,

"For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37)

1. The gift of the working of miracles within Jesus Christ!

As pointed out in I Timothy 3:16 and Matthew 1:21, this God

of miracles, came down to this earth, taking the form of man and walked on this earth, in the name of "Jesus". What was the remark of the people, on seeing Him? They said that He *"...was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people"* (Luke 24:19)

Again, as testified by John 14:11, Jesus commanded His disciples: *"...believe Me for the sake of the works themselves"* John 20:30 and 21:25 assert dearly that the wonders and miracles done by Jesus were so innumerable that they could not be recorded in all the books in the world.

Among these countless miracles, one particular miracle always moves my heart. About this outstanding miracle Job 9:8 had prophesied as below:

"He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea" (Job 9:8)

This is what exactly our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to demonstrate before His disciples and prove to them that He was the God manifested in flesh, "walking on the waves of the sea." The Bible describes this incident graphically in Matthew 14:25,33 and tells us that He just did so, accordingly.

"Now in the fourth watch of night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea."

Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God'"

Once "Jesus Calls" Good News Meeting was conducted in the metropolis, Bombay; nearly 300,000 people participated in it. My son, Paul Dhinakaran and myself preached five nights alternately. One evening, one of my friends told me, "I was a little late for the meeting, last night. So, I could find a seat only in the last row, far away from the platform where you were, and listened to the sermon and songs. I participated in the final prayer too. The whole time I was thinking that it was you who preached. But only at the end of the meeting, did I come to know that it was your son, Paul, who preached, sang and prayed in the meeting.

The same voice! The same sweetness in singing! The same power of prayer! The miracles that were wrought by his prayer were also astonishing.

See! If there can be a testimony about a human being like this, it is no wonder that the Son of God, Jesus, who is The image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15) and who is The brightness of His glory and the express image of His person' (Heb. 1:3) exhibited wonderfully the gift of the working of

miracles.

2. The gift of the working of miracles within man!

The following is the account given in the Bible, of the man of God, Moses:

"But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel"
(Deut. 34:10-12)

Again, the Bible refers to prophet Elisha, who performed many miracles, as testified in II Kings 8:4:

"Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, 'Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done'"

St. Paul, who was called to be an apostle by the Lord, while talking of his ministry asserts:

"Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds"
(II Cor. 12:12)

In the same way, reference to the ministries of the other apostles has been made in the Bible:

"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people..."
(Acts 5:12)

Yes! The Lord God had bestowed, through His boundless mercy, on the chosen people of the Old Testament this gift of the working of miracles. But the Son of God, Jesus, coming down on this earth sacrificed His own life for the salvation of mankind. He ascended up to His Father in Heaven, pleaded with Him and received from Him the "Gifts", including the gift of the working of miracles, for His disciples and He is also granting them liberally to all those who yearn and plead for them.

"You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God might dwell there" (Ps. 68:18)

"..When He (Jesus) ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8)

Don't these verses, cited above, confirm this stupendous truth?

There was an incomparable magician in India, called P.C. Sorcar. When he was conducting his magical performances in Japan, he died in an accident. After his death, his son continued his father's profession and gave magical performances in several places.

Once the News Reporters asked him how he was able to perform, exactly like his father. His reply was, "When my father died, I was shattered. Later, when I took up his profession, I had no confidence at all, that I can really perform those breathtaking feats like him. I was bewildered. So I shed tears, remembering my father. Then it appeared as though the spirit of my father descended on me. Today I am able to perform all the magical feats, exactly like my father through the power given by the presence of his spirit."

In a similar manner the Son of God, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of our Father, God" down to His disciples, according to His promise:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)

True! The Son of God, Jesus, gives the Spirit of His Father (Matt. 10:20) to His servants and 'works miracles' through them (Gal.3:5). We can categorize these miracles, as follows.

The Categories of Miracles!

1. Miracles for sick people!

Wherever Lord Jesus went about, He did two kinds of ministry. He preached the Gospel of the kingdom of God and He healed every sickness and every disease among the people (Matt. 4:23 ; 9:35; John 6:2).

Even today, we can see miracles happening in the same way, wherever the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ is manifested.

In the year 1994, we had gone to the city of Pune (North India) to conduct "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings. Just a day before the commencement of the campaign, the prayer warriors who had been continuously praying for the blessings on the meetings, assembled in the ground, where the campaign was to take place. They walked across the whole ground, criss-crossing from one side to the other and from one corner to the other, praying earnestly for the presence of the Lord Jesus all over the ground. The entire ground was thus saturated with the matchless presence of Jesus Christ, even before the meeting commenced.

A sister, who had never heard about Christ or about these meetings or the preachers, came to the first day's meeting out of curiosity. She had all kinds of diseases from the crown of her head to the sole of her feet. The meeting was yet to commence. Only the choir was singing sweet songs. She was almost one of the first set of people to enter the ground. Later, this lady gave an amazing testimony: "As soon as I entered the ground, some kind of divine presence overwhelmed me. A divine power pierced through me, from top to toe. All the diseases in my body just disappeared immediately."

Her witness, truly, shook the hearts of all. True! Wherever the presence of the Son of God Jesus is, there occur miracles, healing people spontaneously.

2. Miracles for material needs of life!

Wherever the Lord Jesus went, multitudes of people thronged to listen to His preaching. Once, enchanted by His 'gracious words' (Luke 4:22) and mighty miracles, they stayed with Him for three days continuously at a place in the wilderness. On the third day, when they were about to depart, Jesus told His disciples,

"I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now

continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way" (Matt. 15:32)

Out of the great compassion within Him, He blessed the seven loaves and a few fishes given to Him by His disciples and performed a great miracle, by feeding more than four thousand people, to their satisfaction. We read in Matthew 14:19,20, that another similar miracle was done by Jesus Christ, to take care of the physical needs of the people.

From John 2:1-11, we understand that the very first miracle Jesus Christ performed was at a house of wedding. When there was a shortage of wine in the wedding house, He miraculously transformed ordinary water, stored for washing purposes of the people, into a tasty wine. Did He not make perfect what was lacking' in the house of wedding through a miracle?

In the Old Testament, when we read about prophet Elisha, we find that the wonderful gift of the working of miracles operated very powerfully in his life.

According to II Kings 2:21, Elisha healed the bad (salty) water in the name of the Lord. II Kings 4:42-44 narrate how he fed one hundred men who had come to meet him, with just 'twenty loaves of barley bread and newly ripened grain' that had been brought to him by a man. When it was discovered that there was death' (poison) in the stew prepared for those people, he put some flour into it and made the poison disappear. Again, as recorded in II Kings 5:10,14, when the commander of the Syrian army, Naaman came to him afflicted with leprosy, he advised him to wash himself in river Jordan seven times and this word of wisdom brought a miraculous healing from leprosy.

When there was a great famine in Samaria, by his 'word of the Lord', the famine, overnight, turned into prosperity and the hunger and starvation of the people vanished, as referred to, in II Kings 7:1. Earlier in II Kings 4:1-7 we read of another wonderful miracle. When the wife of the son of a prophet cried out to Elisha for help, sinking in debt, he helped her to clear the debt, by making the one jar of oil she had multiply into many jars of oil. He told her, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; you and your sons live on the rest" (II Kin. 4:7).

Yes! The Lord is ever willing to perform miracles to meet the physical needs of His people through His servants.

Once a poor mother came to me with a strange prayer

request. She said with tears, "Sir, I own many cows and make my livelihood only through selling the milk from the cows. Quite suddenly, my cows have started to die, one by one. I cannot find out what they are ailing from. Please help me." Then I, led by the Holy Spirit, took a bottle of oil, prayed with burden, for the power of God to descend into it and handed it over to her, saying, "Smear it on the cows and pray." She received it with great faith and applied the oil on the diseased cows. The cows were miraculously restored to health. On hearing this news, the neighbours whose cows were also languishing, asked for the oil, and the woman shared it cheerfully with them and those cows also revived.

One day she found to her dismay that the whole oil was exhausted and there were only a few drops left in the bottle. Now the lady was worried about what she would do, if her cows became sick once again. The Lord performed another miracle! The next morning when she awoke, she was surprised to find the bottle filled up with oil to the brim, exactly as she received from me. Anyway she didn't have to use the oil again, because her cows remained quite fat with robust health yielding a good amount of milk, as before.

Yes! Even at the present time, just as in the days of Elisha, God is desirous of doing miracles to meet the needs of His people.

3. Miracles for the broken-hearted and for broken homes!

Luke 7:12,13 describe a heart warming miracle. Our Saviour Jesus saw a weeping widow walking behind the dead body of her only son, being carried out to the burial ground. Moved by compassion, Jesus consoled her, saying, "Woman, do not weep!" Then He touched the bier and brought the young man to life by commanding, "Young man, arise!" Through His miracle, He built up that family again. We read of an astonishing miracle, in Luke 8:54,55. We see Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, coming to invite Jesus to his house, to pray for his daughter, who was on the verge of death.

Before Jesus reached his house, however, news reached Jairus that his daughter was dead. Probably Jairus would have broken down. On beholding this, Jesus was moved with compassion, continued His journey to his house and raised the dead girl back to life. He reunited the family and gave them joy.

In the same way, Jesus Christ rebuilt the family of the parentless sisters Mary and Martha by raising their dead brother, Lazarus back to life, four days after his death through an astounding miracle, as narrated in John 11:43,44.

I Kings 17:19-22 describe to us how Elijah pleaded with the Lord, weeping bitterly when the only son of the widow, who looked after him during the famine, had died!

"Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived"

(I Kin. 17:22)

Oh! What a glorious miracle He did to rebuild her home! As we read in II Kings 4:34, prophet Elisha too, worked out a similar miracle by raising the only God given son of a Godly elderly couple and revived that little family's happiness.

Yes! My beloved! Our Lord God is powerful enough to perform miracles to build up shattered families and revive broken hearts even today, as He did in the Biblical days!

In Tirunelveli, in South India, there is a servant of God called John Rabindranath. Through him, the Lord has raised up, to life, many dead people. I am giving below an account of just one of such miracles, culled from his book, "Miracles". I am sure it will thrill you!

"A small boy (of about 5 years) died during one prayer meeting arranged by Pastor Dennison, who was in charge of the 'International Zion Assembly of God Church', in Utchakadai, a place near Venganur in Trivandrum (South India). I was to preach in that meeting. The mother was weeping and the father was holding the dead body of his son, in his arms. There was a huge outcry among the people.

I was waiting myself in the presence of the Lord in my room, preparing for the meeting. As there was a lot of furore outside, I requested the pastor to go and find out the reason.

I was given the news of the death of a child by one of my co-workers, Mr. Williams. He also told me that it might not be possible to conduct the meeting as there was a huge crowd of people, and among them a few political leaders, too, witnessing what was happening. He also asked me not to pray for the child, as it would lead the people to blaspheme the name of the Lord, if the child was not restored to life.

I asked him to bring the child to me. As Mr. Williams was scared of the people, he was not inclined to bring the dead

child to me. But, Pastor Stephen and Pastor Dennison brought the dead child to me. I lifted up the body of the child and I asked the public to come up to the stage to touch and examine whether the child was alive or dead. I did so, because I knew fully well, that there were sceptical Sadducees and Pharisees among the crowd, who would doubt everything. I waited for a few minutes for the public to verify the truth. Then I requested the people to throw away the cigarettes, they had with them. They obligingly obeyed. I knelt down and cried to the resurrected King of kings, Christ. The dead child was revived to life. The whole crowd was electrified. They listened to my preaching on Christ with great curiosity and open heart. The Lord God has done many miracles in my ministry in the same way."

"He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken"
(Is.25:8)

Yes! Our God is merciful (Ps. 116:5). His compassion heals broken hearts and builds up broken homes, and is prepared to work out many miracles for this purpose even at the present times.

4. Miracles for the gospel ministry!

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation... God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

(Heb. 2:3,4; Rom. 15:18,19)

"Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands"

(Acts 14:3 ; Mark 16:20)

As evidenced by the verses referred to above, the Lord performed many miracles to confirm the Gospel preached by His disciples.

5. Miracles which bring holy fear!

Please read Acts 13:9-12. St. Paul went to the city, called Paphos from Cyprus. When he, along with Barnabas, was invited by the proconsul, Sergius Paulus to preach the word of God to him, a false prophet and sorcerer named Bar-Jesus or

Elymas withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then St. Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time" (Acts 13:11). And it happened exactly so!

"Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord"

(Acts 13:12)

In order to explain and demonstrate the doctrine of faith to His disciples, Jesus cursed a fig tree. The Bible records that 'The fig tree dried up from the roots' to their great surprise (Mark 11:20,21). Acts 5:3-11 describe how, when Ananias and Sapphira tried to lie to the Holy Spirit, the apostle Peter, who was filled with the Holy Spirit, rebuked them; they fell down in the same place one after another, and breathed their last. So great a tear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things (Acts 5:11).

Several years ago, in a certain town, a servant of God established a small church. The Spirit of God was full in his life and hence many miracles were performed in his ministry. Through his ministry, a leper, a young man with a rotting body, was healed miraculously; he was baptised and became a member of the church, too!

Days passed! This young man forgot his past. Approaching the pastor, he requested him to help him get married to a rich man's daughter, who was attending their church services. The pastor gave him his wise counsels: "You are uneducated; you don't have any status. You are nowhere in comparison with the girl's lofty status. This won't suit you!" The young man did not heed his advice. Everyday he was pestering the pastor! One day in a sudden fit of anger, the pastor, in the presence of all, said, "Have you forgotten that you had been a leper once?" That was all! The leprosy, which had left him, gripped him again, from head to foot. The whole congregation trembled and the fear of the Lord overtook them all.

6. Miracles that enthrall and draw people to God!

Look at the verses Luke 5:1-10. The Lord met Simon Peter and his friends by the lake of Gennesaret. They had toiled all night and caught not a single fish. Yet Jesus Christ said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a

catch" (Luke 5:4). When they obeyed Him, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking (Luke 5:6). The Lord Jesus worked out a great miracle to their astonishment. When they brought their boats to land, they 'forsook all and followed Him' (Luke 5:11).

Another exciting miracle is reported in Mark 4:39-41. Jesus rebuked the raging sea, which had become tumultuous due to a great windstorm, by giving it a very concise command, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm (Mark 4:39).

This miracle created an intense respect mingled with awe for Jesus in the minds of His disciples.

"And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!'"
(Mark 4:41)

Several years ago, I was conducting "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings in Vellore in South India. At that time, a testimony given by a Judge in the meeting brought a very great thrill to every one's heart. This is the summary of his testimony:

"I belong to another State; I have no knowledge of the Tamil language at all. I was afflicted with many ailments.

I came for a medical check up with a view to find out how long I would be able to survive. One evening, in deep despair, I was planning to have a walk outside the hospital. At that juncture, I was happy to see an old friend of mine on the road. He was surprised to see me there: I told him all about my sad plight. He too was a little shaken. He had a Bible in his hand, and said that he was going to this meeting; I too accompanied him. I was amazed at the thronging multitude of people in this venue. I took a seat at the rear, in the last row along with my friend. This is my first experience of attending such a Christian meeting.

Brother Dhinakaran came to the stage and started to give his sermon. Though he was speaking in Tamil, amazingly, I could understand the whole sermon, in a wonderful manner. This was the first miracle I experienced. The time for prayer came. At that time he said, "This is the time for receiving your miracles! Plead with the Lord for your miracles!" These words only surprised me. The question, 'How can miracles happen before our very eyes?' rose within me. All the people around me were crying out to God, praying aloud, spelling out their needs. It was at that moment a miracle happened!

As I was constantly looking at the stage, I saw a light like

lightning filling around Brother Dhinakaran and the whole stage. Then that light spread around, towards the multitude of people. Very slowly, it moved towards me also; and as soon as it came over me, a divine peace which the world cannot give, filled my heart. Completely overwhelmed by it, I fell down on my face. When I opened my eyes, the meeting had ended and the audience were going home. I looked at my watch and realised only then that I had been in a trance for about 45 minutes. I returned to the hospital with an enthusiastic gait. For the first time, I felt very hungry. I ate the entire food which the nurse gave me; I slept profoundly. Next day, after the medical check up, I was declared quite healthy by the doctors, who were also quite exhilarated over my sudden improvement. I will never forget the Lord Jesus who has given me this new life."

Yes! This kind of miracles confirm the truth about Christ, whom we preach in our Gospel meetings.

7. Miracles as proof of the truth that Jesus lives!

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever"
(Heb.13:8)

The Bible affirms that Jesus Christ 'presented Himself alive by many infallible proofs' after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). One such instance is described in John 21:6. After the resurrection of Jesus, His disciple Simon Peter, with a broken heart, went back to his previous profession of fishing. The resurrected Jesus stood on the shore and finding that they had not caught any fish, said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So when they did so, they caught so great a multitude of fishes that they were not able to draw their net in. He had already done a very similar miracle when He had drawn Peter and his friends to Himself, according to Luke 5:4-6. This recast of the same miracle is to show Peter and his friends, that the very same Jesus Christ was standing before them.

Recently, I had been to Madurai, a city in South India to conduct "Jesus Calls" Good News Meetings. One night when the Spirit of the Lord descended on me, I announced: "There is a man called 'Andrew' seated on the second chair in the nineteenth row, to my left. Andrew! You are sceptical about the working of the Holy Spirit in this place. Jesus is alive even today! He is healing all your diseases from head to foot. He is

expelling all your doubts." Just so, the man came to the stage and, recounting all his experiences, witnessed openly, "I have come to realize now that Jesus is alive." His witness proved, very clearly and precisely, to the people that Jesus is alive and inspired the faith of the people. I can cite thousands of witnesses of a similar kind.

Yes! All miracles are performed by our Lord Jesus, just to convince the people that He is alive.

The Gift of the Working of Miracles!

So far we have been considering various kinds of miracles done by Jesus Himself. But the gift of the working of miracles is the conferment of this power of Christ on people who work out miracles, on their own in order to reveal His glory.

For example, read I Kings 18:38,39. It was the time, when the Israelites had turned away from the Lord of Israel, and were living, just as they pleased. At this juncture, God sent Elijah in their midst. He challenged the people to return to the Lord from their backsliding. Then he prayed to the Lord openly in front of all the Israelites. "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench" (I Kin. 18:38). This miracle sent shivers in the spine of everyone who witnessed it. All the people fell on their faces declaring, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" (I Kin. 18:39).

Elijah demonstrated God's might to prove to the prophets of Baal: "God is still alive; He is the God of Israel; He is the only true God." Now read II Kings 1:9-12. After these events, Elijah was sitting on the top of a hill. King Ahazia, who despised matters related to Jehovah, the God of Israel, sent a captain of the army with his fifty men, to take him captive. Elijah declared to the captain who asked him to come down: "If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from Heaven and consume you and your fifty men" (II Kin. 1:10). And fire did come down from Heaven and consumed them all. This happened twice. Elijah had the power of doing miracles on his own. He had the power of bringing down fire from Heaven, whenever he wished. Yes! He had the gift of the working of miracles.

Consider the case of Elijah's disciple Elisha. He had received a 'double portion of the spirit' of Elijah (II Kin. 2:9). So he was filled with the gift of the working of miracles abundantly. Each word he uttered brought about a miracle!

A simple example is provided in II Kings 6:1-7. Once he went with the sons of the prophets to a place near Jordan to cut down trees. When one of them, dropped the iron axe head into the water, he cried, "Alas! Master, for it was borrowed." When the man of God asked him, "Where did it fall?", He pointed out the spot to him. Elisha cut off a stick and threw it in the water, making the iron float. He told the man, "Pick it up for yourself." What a profound miracle it is ! Yes! God had filled him with the

gift of the working of miracles in double measure.

Many years ago, the pastor of the church in which I was a member, narrated an episode from the life of a reputed pastor, Egbert as follows: "One day a sceptic who did not have any belief in the Bible was disputing with him about "Faith" for several hours. Finally, Pastor Egbert was so fed up that he wanted to dismiss him somehow. So he asked him, "What would you like to have, as a drink?" The man replied, "Just a bottle of soda will do; my throat is parched." Pastor Egbert just closed his eyes, in reverence and prayed: "Lord, send me two bottles of soda." That was all! Suddenly two bottles of soda appeared on the table from nowhere, before the sceptic's wide open eyes! Pastor Egbert calmly said, "This is faith!" That man was stunned; he fell on his face in the same place and prayed, 'Lord Jesus! Please forgive me; come into my heart.'"

1. Operation of this gift!

We have considered how Elijah brought down fire from Heaven and how, through this miracle, drew the people who had gone astray, to the Lord once again. He prayed for the fire to come down, pleading,
"...LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word" (1 Kin. 18:36)

What we understand from Elijah's prayer is that the Lord had already promised him that He would captivate the hearts of His people by sending down fire from Heaven. That is why he mentioned in his prayer, "I have done all these things at Your word." It happened exactly so!

Moses also made a similar statement! Numbers 16:28-32 describe a spine-chilling miracle done by him. Once he was ridiculed beyond endurance by a set of people. He commanded that the earth should open its mouth to swallow alive the man, Korah, the leader of that rebellious gang and all the people, who were with him along with all that belonged to them. The earth did open its mouth and swallowed up Korah, his men, their houses, and all their belongings exactly as Moses had commanded. Earlier Moses had said, "By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will" (Num. 16:28). So, the Lord had already revealed to Moses also how that miracle, must be made

to happen.

Yes! God always first reveals to His servants His counsel and His will through the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge. He also then tells us what exactly we should command, in the name of Jesus.

Then the miracle happens exactly as we command.
Does not the Psalmist, too, refer to the same experience?

"Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope.

This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life" (Ps. 119:49,50)

Many years ago, I had gone to a particular city to preach the Gospel. At that time, the Mayor of the city honoured me and arranged a public reception, on a large scale, for me and my team members. He is not a Christian. When I was chatting with him during the feast, he emphasised a point. He said, "Sir! A significant thing, you should pray for, is rain. This morning, as I went round visiting the outskirts of the city, by car, what I saw was 'drought' everywhere. All the plants and vegetation are withered, and there is not even a drop of water in our wells or ponds. The cattle are languishing without water and folder. This spectacle agonised my heart. Please pray for rains in our city." I went back to my room and prayed with great concern, for rain. The Holy Spirit revealed to me, through the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge what I should command and receive.

The evening meeting began that day. The Mayor and other dignitaries were attending the meeting, irrespective of their religious affinity; they gave me a grand welcome. When I rose up to offer my gratitude, I told the audience that the Mayor had asked me to pray for rain. I made the whole audience stand up and said, "Now we are going to pray for rain; God will definitely listen to our prayer made in one voice and with one accord." I prayed just as Jesus had told me. That was all! It began to drizzle!

I continued to pray, saying, "Lord, not now, but let it pour down after the end of this evening meeting." The drizzle ceased; all were amazed! It was a greater surprise to the Mayor, who presided, and the other dignitaries. The whole night, after the meeting, there was a heavy downpour of rain, which continued the next day too, so much so we could not

conduct the meeting that day.

The next day, the Mayor gave a grand feast to me and my team members. At that time he said, "I went round the outskirts of the city once again. What a change! All wells, pools and ponds are full; the cattle are leaping for joy. But the greatest wonder is that there has not been a single drop of rain beyond the borders of my city. Truly God has answered your prayer!" He thus shared his witness with all, rapturously. He didn't stop there. He encouraged people of his religion, who usually do not attend Christian meetings, especially women, to attend our meetings; and from the next day, there was a huge crowd. People of all religions came there with great eagerness to feel the presence of the Lord Jesus walking there. His name was glorified.

Yes! Before the gift of the working of miracles operates, God reveals to His chosen servants, as to how to use that gift. At that time, that word of wisdom inculcates in the servants of God a matchless faith and courage; they use this gift without any trace of fear or tremor in their heart.

2. Operation of this gift with other 'Gifts'!

We should never lose sight of the fact that all the "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit work, interacting with each other only. When they work thus in unison, they have an added power and glory. So when this gift of the working of miracles operates, intermingled with the other "Gifts", their effectiveness becomes more pronounced.

Let us consider a situation in which this gift of the working of miracles interacts with the gifts of healings.

In Mark 16:18, we read what Jesus Christ had said of His disciples, before being taken up to Heaven. He declared that they 'will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.' The word 'recover' here means 'to gain back the lost health' gradually after prayer.

But when the gift of the working of miracles combines with the gifts of healings, the recovery is instantaneous! In Acts 3:6,7, we have an example. Peter and John, on seeing a man sitting at the gate of the temple, lame from his mother's womb were inspired, in Spirit, through faith granted by Christ. Peter took him by the right hand and lifted him up, saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. The

Bible describes him as 'the man on whom this miracle of healing had been performed' (Acts 4:22).

True! The Lord, who had given them the gifts of healings, should have granted them the gift of the working of miracles to interact simultaneously with the former. That is why the lame man, instead of being healed gradually, was healed instantly in a wonderful manner.

In 1993, I had been to Germany. They had arranged a Gospel meeting in Berlin, just for one evening. When I started praying, at the end of the meeting, for the people, the gift of the word of wisdom and the gift of the word of knowledge came over me. I said, "There is a sister called 'Aruna' here, whose lungs are diseased. The Lord Jesus Christ is healing her. She has come with her husband and two children travelling many miles. If they come to the stage now, I will pray for them to be blessed as a family." Aruna is a rare name in Germany. However, the crowd was thrilled when a couple with their two children came up to the stage. They were in ecstasy!

That sister Aruna, with both her lungs afflicted severely, was being given different kinds of treatment in a hospital to no avail. Hearing reports of my one day crusade in Berlin, they had decided to come, from about 500 miles away. The doctors did not give her permission to travel. They warned her: "On the way, some complication may arise, fatal to your life!" As the couple persisted, the hospital authorities permitted them to go, after obtaining a written statement from them to the effect: "The hospital is not responsible for any mishap that may occur on the way." Jesus saw their faith, took compassion on Aruna, called her by name, and promised her of the healing.

When the family returned to the hospital, travelling 500 miles again, the doctors were surprised to find that she had recovered miraculously and there was no trace of that foul disease, on examining her. They sent her home, certifying that she was in perfect health.

You may take notice of the conglomeration of "Gifts" in Aruna's wonderful healing! The gift of the word of knowledge, the gift of the word of wisdom, the gift of prophecy, the gifts of healings and the gift of faith! With all these, the gift of the working of miracles has intermingled to heal the fatal lung disease instantly.

My dear ones! Of all times in the history of the Christian church, the most critical time when the servants of God require the gift of the working of miracles is now! This is the time, all

over the world, when Satan is working "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception" (II Thess. 2:9,10 ; Rev. 13:13,14 ; 16:14). We are living at a time when fraudulent signs are manifested through the power of the devil. We see with our own eyes many people being deceived by demonic signs and going astray.

Nevertheless the Lord God Almighty has given a wonderful promise to His followers in Acts 2:19-21:

"I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapour of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and notable day of the LORD.

And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved"

To bring these words to fulfilment, let us pray with tears: "O Lord,, fill us with the gift of the working of miracles through Your divine might, resisting the demonic fraudulent signs, and grant us grace to perform miracles, to the glorification of Your name, drawing billions of people to the Cross of Calvary!"

Though, for 40 years, I have been labouring for Christ and toiling hard in His vineyard, this is still my only yearning even today! I long for a greater manifestation of this great gift of the working of miracles, as it worked in Elijah and Elisha. I am convinced beyond any shadow of doubt that this gift alone can draw billions to the "Cross" at one stroke.

Let this be the longing of every one of us!

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